BEYOND THE WALLS: THE CHURCH'S ROLE TO ENGAGE, ENLIGHTEN, AND EMPOWER COMMUNITY THROUGH OUTREACH MINISTRIES

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ABSTRACT

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The model of ministry described herein is the Emergency Preparedness Project, or otherwise, the Project. The Project was designed and implemented as a model for use by the Brookins African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Los Angeles, California; to rally around the church's role to engage, enlighten, and empower the congregation and community. The problem statement suggests that Brookins AME Church is deficient in its outreach ministries. The solution, or, proposed treatment hypothesis follows that: If outreach ministries are made available, the congregation, and critically, the surrounding community will participate; taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and resources provided.

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my parents Johnnie and Linette Jones, and my maternal grandmother Eliza Pettaway. Each of who had a hand in shaping me as a disciple of Christ. I am especially grateful to my parents for providing a loving Christian home, who sacrificed to give my sister and me all of the tools necessary to be successful in life, most importantly, Jesus. I am thankful to my mother who taught me about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. And I am thankful to my grandmother who exemplified what it meant not to just believe in God, but how to live like a child of God.

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I am sure lives in you" (2 Tm 1:5).

INTRODUCTION

Beyond the Walls: The Church's Role to Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Community, is the theme prayerfully selected for this dissertation and model of outreach ministry: The theme, is not expressly stated in all instances, however, it is tied to all aspects of the outreach efforts accomplished and the body of work presented herein. The reader should be aware that the terms Model, Project, Emergency Preparedness Fair, and Event are used inextricably to describe this model of ministry.

Informed by the culmination of two years of intensive theological and social research, study, reflection, organizing and planning; this model of ministry reflects the knowledge and insights acquired from the prescribed coursework with major emphasis from works presented in the spiritual autobiography, context analysis, synergy, biblical, historical, theological, theoretical, and literature review documents.

The process for creating this model began in January 2012 and was implemented on January 11, 2014. The model is designed to engage, enlighten, and empower congregants and members of the community in outreach ministry. To this end, "The Emergency Preparedness Fair Outreach Model" provides participants with survival knowledge that is typically underrepresented in communities of color. Reversing this trend, the model enables each participant and allows them to partake of information and resources, and acquire the knowledge to help themselves and prayerfully others, plan for and respond to unplanned emergency events like fires, earthquakes, and floods.

Engage, enlighten, and empower are the three E's and cornerstones upon which this model is designed. The intent or meaning of the theme is embodied in the three assumptions used in the model design and can be described as follows:

1) *Build it and they will come* - if outreach ministries are available, the congregation of Church and surrounding community will participate, taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and the associations presented.

2) Upon successful implementation, there will be marked participation by the congregation and community resulting in an increased awareness of Church's goals and objectives with regard to community outreach; an expanded sense of community; and an extension of networks designed to engage, enlighten, and empower individuals, groups, and organizations.

3) By extending its reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary, the Church, in effect will spread the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to humankind, enriching the lives of the people it touches, while developing a better and stronger sense of community. This partnering of church and community strengthens and helps create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, extending beyond the walls of the church helps to establish and build relationships with the community—our extended congregation.

Given my covenant with God, education, business experience, leadership roles at Brookins Community African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME),[1] the sphere of influence, and first-hand knowledge of programs and ministries included and missing from Brookins' outreach efforts; Brookins Community AME Church becomes the perfect backdrop for implementing the Project. Furthermore, the model goals and objectives are in complete harmony with and complement the African Methodist Episcopal Church's

[1]Note: The reader should note that Brookins Community African Methodist Episcopal Church is also referred to throughout this ministry project as Brookins, Brookins Community Church, and Brookins AME.

mission statement: "To minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people."[2]

The Brookins Community Church is located at 4831 S. Gramercy Place in Los Angeles, California. The Church is part of Los Angeles County and is located in the heart of south Los Angeles. It is serviced by the California State 48th Assembly District; the Los Angeles City Council District 8; the Southwest Division of Los Angeles Police Department, and located near the University of Southern California.

The *problem statement* is that: Brookins AME Church is deficient in its outreach ministries. The *solution,* or, p*roposed treatment hypothesis* follows that: If outreach ministries are made available, the congregation, and critically, the surrounding community will participate, taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and resources provided.

The selected or primary research method employed is *qualitative research* with an emphasis on inquiry and ethnography. The research instruments used to validate the implementation results are focus groups, interviews, and questionnaires. In summary of the results, participation by congregants was 70% and a slight but impressive 30% participation by non-members. On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, the event can be rated as a 10. F those who participated, 97% found the information useful; 96% were satisfied with the event; and 95% said they would attend other community events hosted by Brookins AME Church.

It is interesting to note overwhelming agreement that Brookins should have more of a presence in the community, Brookins needs to be more known in the community,

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[2]African Methodist Episcopal Church, accessed January 9, 2012, http://www.ame-church.com/about-us/mission.php.

Brookins should have more outreach ministries, and that Brookins needs collaborative partnerships and relationship building with the community in keeping with its outreach ministry and God's covenant.

Notable participating agencies and partners included the following governmental & non-governmental agencies: Los Angeles Emergency Management Department; Los Angeles Department of Water & Power; Southern California Gas Company; Los Angeles Fire Department; Los Angeles Unified School District; Los Angeles County Health Department; California State Department of Insurance; the American Red Cross; SOS Survival Products; Home Depot; US Bank; Target; Food 4 Less; Subway; Walgreens. These agencies set-up information booths staffed with personnel to answer questions and make emergency preparedness literature available. Vendor comments indicate that this Project was the best Emergency Preparedness Fair they had supported, having supported Community Fairs on a frequent basis. The Vendors enjoyed working with the church representatives, which they found accommodating and hospitable.

I would like to give thanks to God, Brookins AME, and all of the resources engaged in the successful implementation of this project. I am grateful for the opportunity to memorialize this project through the prescribed coursework. It is my continued hope that my dedication to service, outreach, and ministries will provide the long needed relief to those in need and that the development of extended family networks serves to further God's work through Christian Outreach Ministry.

Finally, highlights from the documented research and studies leading up to and during project implementation are provided in the following summation of Chapters One through Six.

Chapter one focuses on the integrative effects of the 1) spiritual autobiography; 2) context analysis; and 3) synergy papers. The spiritual autobiography provides the reader with a glimpse into the formative years influencing my belief systems and the subsequent call into the ministry. It describes the repeated challenges and obstacles designed to test my faith and calling, and subsequent entry into a male dominated religious field. It also speaks to the factors influencing the decision to attend theological seminary.

The context analysis describes the cultural history and/or ethnography of the AME church and includes topics like: the historical development of the AME church; societal contributions by the founders of the AME church; and the ways in which the church and Free African Society made manifest the actions against pervasive discrimination against Blacks/African Americans. The hierarchical structure of the AME church and the historical contributions made by the leadership of Brookins Community AME Church are defined. Current outreach ministries are highlighted as well as the demographics comprising the church and the community.

The synergy paper draws attention to the spiritual connections and common intersections, as identified in the spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis, which are: 1) social and religious empowerment provided through ministries and programs, and 2) the ability to affect change using education and skills in business and management. The experience brought to fore is based upon religious experiences, education, business experience, accomplishments in outreach ministries, and experience in the repeating theme of the church expanding beyond its walls. Baby boomers and seniors are identified as growing and underserved population segments that should be the focus of future outreach efforts.

The published sources for action research are noted in chapter two and reflect the most important literature, among others, consisting of books, articles, historical records, and online resources; used in forming and validating conclusions considered in the design and implementation of this model of outreach ministry. The selected materials represent current-day schools of thought, opinions, and expertise and address topics such as outreach ministry, leadership, administration, structures for ministry models, preaching, and the historical accounts of the AME church. An annotated bibliography of research literature reviewed is also included.

The narrative in chapter three consistently courses through the three frameworks - biblical, historical, and theological foundations and the accompanying syntax that is consistent with this model's goals and objectives: engagement, enlightenment, and empowerment—the 3 E's as embodied by research into each foundation that speaks to compassion, church and community, community outreach, fellowship, caring for others, sharing with others, building relationships, establishing collaborative partnerships, church as center of community, helping the marginalized and disenfranchised, and giving of oneself. Together, the biblical, historical and theological foundation research facilitates a better understanding of the model's subject matter as it relates to each foundation.

The biblical foundations presented in support of the project theme are found in the Old Testament, Nehemiah 2:17-18, and in the New Testament scriptures, Matthew 5:13-16. In attempting to demonstrate the parallels of engaging, enlightening, and empowering, the discussion centers on Nehemiah and Jesus. Nehemiah, actively engaged in the restoration of Israel; and Jesus actively instructed his disciples that they were the salt of

the earth, the light of the world. Hope is created as we attempt to show how the teachings of Nehemiah and Jesus illuminate a community in an otherwise dark world.

The historical foundations link with African American history and center around the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, its vision, mission, goals and objectives. Core tenets, central in the AME worship experience, are the subtext and repeated throughout this document—independent worship, self-help, self-reliance, and self-determination of Blacks. The historical foundation attempts to frame the origins of the liberation message of self-help, self-reliance, and self-determination started by Richard Allen, and the relevance of this message today. A universal message, not only for African Americans, but a universal message which embraces, welcomes and speaks to all multi-cultural communities disenfranchised today.

The theological foundation speaks to ecclesiology, "the branch of theology that is concerned with the nature, constitution, and functions of a church."[3] Ecclesiology is contrasted with Christian theology to inform its historical significance and importance. The narrative for this foundation centers around the AME church and its origin, its relationship to Jesus, its role in salvation, its polity, its discipline, its destiny; and its leadership. Key elements within the ecclesiology framework provide us with a better understanding of the origins and evolution of the church and touches on how ecclesiology gives shape to very different types of religious institutions.

Chapter four speaks to the methodology that was used to conduct research into the validity of the proposed treatment hypothesis and the analysis of the results of the research. The qualitative research method was selected because of the flexibility of

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[3]*The American Heritage Dictionary*, fourth edition (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006).

inquiry, which is the nature of this research method. The emphasis on ethnography and inquiry are well suited for the qualitative method, which allows for the free flow of information and dialogue. Interviews, focus-group meetings, and questionnaires were the three research instruments used to collect the data required to prove the hypothesis. Taped conversations, notes, and databases were used to record and store the information gathered. Triangulating the data and pre and posttest methods were used to prove and test the hypothesis and corresponding assumptions. The interviews and focus group provided qualitative information captured in narrative and the questionnaire provided statistical data and participant comments, both correlating the validity of the hypothesis. The questionnaire indicated that 97% of the respondents found the information, e.g., presentations, handouts, printed literature, and interactions with the vendors and agencies useful; 96% were very satisfied with the event; and 95% said they would attend other community events at Brookins.

Chapter five provides additional detail of the research methodology and describes the field experience prior to and during implementation. Field experiences described in this chapter reflect the personal insights, practical experiences, and factual observations gained during the planning, development, and implementation stages. Tasks marked pre and post implementation were identified during the planning stage and are reflected in the project timeline. The project timeline identifies high-level project tasks that necessitate interaction with project participants. Feedback on what is perceived as participant experience during implementation is discussed, in addition to post implementation tasks; key accomplishments, and lessons learned. Further, chapter five provides insight into the

interviews that were conducted, the content of the focus group discussions, and salient facts and comments afforded by the questionnaire.

Chapter six calls attention to biblical and modern-day figures dedicated to Christian ministry and outreach. Nehemiah is cited along with his challenges to go beyond the walls of the church and how those efforts correlate with the need to do more outreach today. Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church is used as the modern day example of Christian outreach. Allen's role as an ex-slave, a preacher, and arguably a community activist and organizer are discussed. Important to the ethnography of the AME church, the discussion also centers on Allen as one of the founders of the Free African Society (FAS), a mutual-aid society dedicated to social justice and to elevating "…the moral, financial, and educational status of Blacks."[4]

Additionally, chapter six is a reflection of the theological learning's influencing the project; the thoughts and feelings that were experienced pre and post implementation; and the transformation occurring in all of those involved. Importantly, this chapter renders a conclusion on the importance of outreach ministries and emergency preparedness to the congregants and community at large. It highlights changes from the initial project proposal, contains recommendations for improving upon the event, and proposes the next steps as a continuation of this body of work. It calls attention to the impressive statistics that are used to measure the success of the model. The data analysis and results component of this project is compelling testimony to the adage—*build it and they will come,* the proposed treatment hypothesis, and major assumptions used in the design of this model of ministry. The results validate the proposed hypothesis on multiple

[4]AME Church History: Struggle Against Bigotry, accessed January 21, 2012, http://christianity.about.com/od/AME/a/AME-Church-History.htm.

levels of inquiry into the beliefs and ideas of the congregation and other participants. Of those who participated, 96% were satisfied with the event and 95% would attend other community events hosted by Brookins AME Church. An astounding 97% felt that the information presented during the fair, was useful.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Reflecting over the past thirty-two years of active Christian stewardship, I first thank and praise God for loving me and choosing me to serve in His kingdom. God is thanked for not giving up on me before accepting the call to ordained ministry. It is indeed an honor and a privilege to serve the Most High and His people. Looking back over the years leading to today, the emerging plan of God's for my life brings me to this point in my ministry. Today I am a proud, educated, bi-vocational, African American clergywoman striving to help make a difference in the lives of God's people through preaching, teaching, service, and example. Similar to the ways in which my parents, grandmother, and other faithful saints of the church taught me about the love of Jesus, I take great joy in teaching and sharing the love of Jesus with others.

Since entering the ministry, my spiritual journey has been one of service and blessings. Having adjusted well in a *good ole boys*' club community, the Lord has removed self-imposed fears about my role as a pastor. In fact, since entering the ministry, there as not been an instance where someone was intentionally rude to me or questioned my calling. Time spent with God over the years through prayer and scripture reading has increased my faith and empowered me with strength and courage to look beyond peoples' idiosyncrasies and to focus on the mission. Sexism, prejudice, discrimination, and injustice continue to be a part of life, even inside the walls of the church. However, we

learn to address these issues on a case-by-case basis when confronted. Discrimination is not always male against female, but it also exists female against female. The *isms* created in the church and society come from both genders. As more and more women answer their call to ordained ministry, there is much work to be done in terms of women supporting and building cohesive relationships with one another.

The distinction of being one of five women in ministry honored by the Top Ladies of Distinction, Inc. (TLOD), Ladera Heights Chapter, Los Angeles. The honoring event was held at the Marriott Hotel in Torrance, California with approximately five hundred attendees. When first approached by TLOD, the invitation came as a total surprise. Top Ladies of Distinction is a national service organization with over 2,000 women and 3,000 Teens. I am extremely pleased that they identified me as someone worthy of their recognition, particularly since I had no prior affiliation with their organization. This was not only an honor and blessing for me but it was also of historical significance for women in ordained ministry.

There have been several other unexpected events over the past year in recognition of my Christian stewardship. There have been unsolicited invitations to preach, a Citation from the City of Los Angeles, and several feature articles in the Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper. The Sentinel is an African American newspaper that is highly regarded by the greater Los Angeles community. The TLOD and other invitations continue to surprise and delight me. A tribute extends to the church, community, family, and friends, whenever Christian stewardship is welcomed and acknowledged. As ministry continues to evolve and develop in service of the Lord, each community accolade and recognition will accrue to the benefit of community partners, the church as an organization, and to

my theological studies. This symbolism is God's affirmation of my choice to accept the call to ordained ministry. He is pushing me to expand my ministry as He continues to mold and shape me into the person He would have me become, according to His plan. Proverbs 18:16 say, your gifts will make room for you.

My pastor during this past six years is also my mentor. Reverend Dr. Williams is the second pastor that I have served since being ordained in ministry. When I served at Ward AME Church, in Los Angeles, Dr. Williams appointed me to the role of Executive Minister, in addition to providing me with his unwavering support. I salute Dr. Williams for having the faith, confidence, and courage to appoint me, a qualified woman, Executive Minister. I am unaware of any other women executive ministers in the Los Angeles area. Under the leadership of Dr. Williams, I have learned a great deal about the art of preaching. I am thankful for his continued support of my theological studies.

My faith journey continues to be renewed and strengthened day-by-day through God's grace. I continue to be led by the Holy Spirit, seeking where the Lord will have me serve next. A natural progression for my level of service within the AME church hierarchy is pastor. However, I have not heard the call to the pastorate. There are so many other areas in the church to serve the people of God in the 21st Century. As I continue along my faith journey, preparing for the next level of service, God has called me to further my theological training as I pursue an advanced degree in the doctoral program.

As an African American seeking to further the religious beliefs and practices established by the AME Church, and aspiring to do God's work through Christian outreach and ministry, it is a privileged to serve as Executive Pastor of the historic Brookins Community African Methodist Episcopal Church. Under the current leadership

of the Senior Pastor, Reverend C. Dennis Williams, the goals and objectives of the Brookins Community Church are complementary to the mission and vision of the AME Church at large. The Brookins Community AME Church's Mission Statement states that Brookins Community AME Church is a church committed to moving beyond a shallow faith and making tremendous sacrifices for the community as a church.

The Brookins Community Church is located at 4831 S. Gramercy Place in Los Angeles, California. The Church is part of Los Angeles County and is located in the heart of South Los Angeles. It is serviced by the California State 48th Assembly District, the Los Angeles City Council District 8, the Southwest Division of Los Angeles Police Department, and located near the University of Southern California. In the spirit and tradition of Richard Allen, Brookins Community AME Church was founded April 24, 1977, under the leadership of Bishop Hamel Hartford Brookins. The church has served as a beacon of hope for its community and congregation and as a resource for self-development and empowerment for thirty-five years. Bishop Brookins recognized the need for another AME church in the area—one that would meet the needs of the growing population of South Los Angeles. Inasmuch, he organized a new edifice under the banner of the Fifth Episcopal District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Brookins Community AME Church started as a two-year pilot program under girded by the Southern California Conference of the AME Church. Bishop Brookins served as interim pastor for two months until he could find a new pastor. Given limited resources, he worked with two Presiding Elders and borrowed nine members from First AME Church, Los Angeles, to establish the church program. During his search for a pastor, the church membership grew to forty-one.

Bishop Brookins headed south to find a preacher who was the right age and who had the right degree of maturity to work with this fledgling community congregation. Bishop Brookins was searching for a pastor with a keen vision, dynamic leadership skills, and the ability to motivate people. Brookins considered these skills essential for leadership of a new church especially one without an established history. Reverend Dr. Theodore Larry Kirkland, Sr., was offered the position, and with much thought and prayer, Kirkland accepted and became Brookins Community Church's first official pastor on June 5, 1977.

In his new assignment, Reverend Kirkland began the awesome task of growing the congregation and was responsible for construction and building that included a kitchen in the lower level, a choir loft, the pastor's office and study, purchasing a baby grand piano, and developing a recording studio. Some of the organizations that Kirkland developed early on were the Sunday school, Women's Missionary Society, Young People's Department, Lay Organization, Music Ministry, Tape Ministry, and other auxiliaries. The main sanctuary was destroyed by fire in 1991 and Pastor Kirkland oversaw a million dollar renovation and seismic retrofitting project to restore and improve the building. In addition, the church purchased several surrounding properties including Brookins Community Development Center.

During his nineteen-year tenure, church membership grew to approximately 3,000 members and new organizations were created such as the New Members Institute, Welcome Club, Couples Club, and several outreach ministries, to meet the needs of the people. In June of 1996, Rev. Kirkland was elected and consecrated the 114th bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The continuing call to ever expand the reach

and resources of the church to all of those in need would continue to be executed by the ministers that followed Rev. Kirkland.

Then presiding prelate of the Fifth Episcopal District, Bishop Vernon R. Byrd, appointed Reverend Dr. Frederick Murph as the second pastor of Brookins in 1996. Under Pastor Murph's leadership, the church continued to grow spiritually and numerically. Reverend Murph added a Thursday Night Bible Study to complement the Pastor's Tuesday Night Bible Study, Wednesday noon Bible Study, Wednesday night mid-week worship service; and a Sunday school class for young Black males ages ten to thirteen. Reverend Murph led the congregation in renovating the main church building, installing a state-of-the-art sound system in the main sanctuary, rehabilitating three church properties, and developing a Job Information Center to provide counseling and assistance in locating jobs for unemployed persons. In 1999, Dr. Murph rallied the congregation to reach beyond its walls in advancing the cause of Christ. He founded the Brookins Community Development Corporation that would operate the Vernon R. Byrd Child Development Center. The center offered day and evening childcare for working parents. During the same year, Reverend Murph founded the Maxine Waters Emancipation Home for Women—to provide housing and job training for single mothers transitioning from welfare to employment. In April 2006, Dr. Murph along with Attorney Thomas Messereau, Jr., founded the Messereau-Ephraim-Villaraigosa Free Legal Clinic, to provide free legal information and referrals for the resident of South Los Angeles.

Bishop Theodore Larry Kirkland, presiding prelate of the Fifth Episcopal District, appointed the Reverend Joseph Nixon as the third pastor of Brookins in 2008. Under Rev. Nixon's leadership, the church experienced a fruitful Restoration, Renovation, and

Rejuvenation Program. The Reverend Dr. C. Dennis Williams was appointed the fourth pastor of Brookins Community AME Church in November 2010. Upon his arrival at Brookins, Reverend Williams found a wounded congregation desperate for care and spiritual leadership. The church had become a casualty of the predatory lending debacle. The church property was in foreclosure. For roughly a year, April 2011 to March 2012, the Bank would not communicate with Brookins AME Church nor or accept any offers that did not total the full amount owed. In the spring of 2011, the church sold the Community Development Center, the Vernon R. Byrd Child Development Center, and other church properties in order to protect the main sanctuary. In November 2011, Brookins AME Church filed for relief under bankruptcy reorganization. In April 2012, the Lord softened the heart of the lender. The Bank reached out to church and began the conversation to reach an agreement. By the end of April, Brookins Community AME Church and the Bank had reached an agreement relative to the monthly mortgage note, interest rate, and property valuation. This blessing and divine intervention removed a terribly heavy burden from the pastor and congregation. The members of Brookins are thankful to God for saving their beloved sanctuary.

As Brookins Community AME Church moves to finalize the chapter of its bankruptcy with the Bank and the Bankruptcy Trustee, there is a sense of revival in the life of the congregation. God is breathing new life into His people similar to the dry bones story in Ezekiel Chapter 37, when Ezekiel asked the question, can these bones live? This foreclosure experience has given the members of Brookins a new testimony about faith and of the goodness of the Lord.

Brookins Community AME Church roll on membership is 1,200. There are one hundred Children under the age of ten, fifty youths under the age of seventeen, fifty young adults under the age of twenty-six, 400 adult men, 600 adult women, and 300 families. The Ministerial Staff is comprised of the Senior Pastor, one Executive Pastor, five Associate Ministers, one Licentiate, and one Exhorter. Given the close relationship between politics and economics, Brookins AME is proud to boast that 100% of its adult members are registered voters. The church is also proud of an annual tradition, Friends and Family Day. The ministries and auxiliaries at Brookins include: the Women's Missionary Society, Lay Organization, Young People's Department, a monthly Free Legal Clinic, Health Ministry, Men's Bible Study, Women's Bible Study, and Pastor's Bible Study. Brookins is currently preparing for a partnership with Habitat for Humanity in July.

The church is open to a growing population of 28,876 residents, mostly African American and Hispanic, with an average of 3.46 people per household. Fifty-two percent of the population is female, and there is a large segment of the population that is comprised of single adults and single parents stemming from divorce, separation, never being married, and being widowed.[1]

Unemployment and economic uncertainty continues to disparage communities of color without exception. Akin to the times of Richard Allen, there is much work to be done by the church. New opportunities abound for AME ministers to use their leadership, organizing, development, people, and teaching skills among others, toward the furtherance of God's ministry.

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[1]United States Census Bureau, "Population Demographics for South Las Angeles," accessed March 6, 2014, http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/06037.html.

The convergence of repeating themes in my spiritual, educational, and business backgrounds lends itself to the pursuit of leadership, administrative, and/or operational roles within the African Methodist Episcopal church. The spiritual connections and common intersections, as identified in my spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis, are: 1) social and religious empowerment provided through ministries and programs; and 2) the ability to affect change using my education and skills in business and management.

In keeping with the mission of the AME church and in following the footsteps of Richard Allen, founder of the AME Church, the development of program and services geared to the needs of the congregation and surrounding communities is as critical today as it was in 1787. Poor and disenfranchised are social characteristics that are all too common in the fastest growing population segments in our society today, especially in communities where there are people of color. The basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing are challenged daily for many AME congregants, their families, and extended communities. Beyond the basic needs, there is also a need for specialized ministries, i.e., prayer ministries, which attend to the spiritual health and economic empowerment needs of our brethren.

Working in the trenches of the Women's Missionary Society and Lay Organization of the AME Church for nineteen years, before answering my call to ordained ministry, these organizations provided me with the training ground to learn the work of missions, the importance of church and community working together, and the process and procedure of the connectional AME Church. The opportunity to work with other Christian women, to serve God's people in the work of missions in our local

communities was invaluable. Having participated in and led in the development of various programs and ministries in the local church and the church body at large, I have witnessed the power of God's work through Christian outreach. Christian ministry provides hope to those without hope, and services and help to those in need. Church ministries that provide invaluable services like feeding the hungry, collecting and distributing clothing and providing spiritual guidance to the less fortunate are essential missional opportunities of the church. Support of programs such as the ones promoting literacy, offering free legal aid, and unemployment assistance is unwavering.

If not the church, then, who will provide for God's children in need? Today, the social and moral imperative is to identify the needs of the congregation and its extended family and community, and to implement those ministries and programs that will provide the greatest good to the greatest number of people. Notwithstanding, there are three major challenges to optimizing programs and ministries in the AME church: 1) the never ending demands on the pastorate; 2) making the most effective use of associate ministers; and 3) forming networks of partnerships between the church and community.

Spiritual passion to help those in need combined with skills, training, and education are the right mix of tools needed to identify options that would be suitable in addressing the three challenges indicated above. Therefore, it was proposed as a single doctoral focus area, a *Needs Assessment for Programs and Ministries.* The assessment would entail the development, distribution, and analysis of key information gathered in the form of formal and informal surveys. The assessment could be administered locally, globally, or both, within and outside of the AME church. Locally, information would be gathered from the pastorate, the leadership, and participants for existing programs and

ministries. Globally, the survey would be conducted at the most impactful levels of the church hierarchy: the Conference level—comprised of all churches in a designated geographical area; Episcopal District level—several designated conferences with bishop oversight, and the Connectional level—all Episcopal Districts totaling the entire church. The surveys, at any level, would be designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data on the performance of existing ministries and programs. They would define the specific needs of the pastorate, congregation, and community related to improving upon, expanding, or creating new ministries and programs, and would assess the availability and current use of associate ministers in program and ministry development. In addition to performing the *needs assessment*, the results would be used to create a proposal or recommendation for the church, either locally, globally, or both. The proposal and/or recommendations would identify synergies between existing programs, methods for optimizing internal and external resources use, and would establish a baseline operating model for programs and ministries development, implementation, and/or enhancement.

Several assumptions have been made in considering the possible survey outcomes. It is anticipate that there will be overlapping needs and unique areas of opportunity that are region specific, in addition to multi-cultural distinctions, in the comparative analysis. The bi-vocational associate or associate minister is an underutilized resource that the pastorate could leverage in program and ministry development. However, as the survey results might suggest, increasingly more associate ministers may have limited availability to assist and support the pastors in their traditional roles, as many of them work either part-time or full-time outside of the church.

The Great Recession has created an urgent need for basic living needs from agencies such as Habitat for Humanity, Bread for the World, American Red Cross, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, Youth Programs, California State Universities Annual Super Bowl Sunday, and Free Legal Clinic. It should be noted that all of these groups and organizations provide services to the benefit of diverse and multi-cultural groups. Another important aspect of program development is the creation and implementation of programs and services for seniors. As the numbers of seniors in need will only increase each year because of aging in the largest population segments—*baby boomers*, the diverse needs of this population will only continue to increase across multiple planes including spiritually, physically, emotionally, and economically. Most recently, an opportunity presented itself to work with the senior ministry of my church to assess and address some of the needs of an aging population in our congregation. *Meals on Wheels* was one such program that our review identified. Significant gratification comes from partnering and collaborating with agencies that are already in the business of doing the work to empower the needy. This partnering of church and community strengthens and helps create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, extending beyond the walls of the church helping to establish and build relationships with the community—our extended congregation.

On a spiritual level, recurring themes in my autobiography and contextual analysis exist such as service, spirit, continuous learning, collaborating, and empowerment. The practical skills and experience developed throughout the years offer many opportunities to serve and excel in the provisioning and administration of programs and services to the church, its congregants, and extended community. The area within the

church that is prime for producing results with the most significant impact is the focus on programs, ministries, and optimizing the role of associate ministers.

Service, outreach, and ministries will provide the long needed relief to those in need and that the development of extended family networks will serve to further God's work through Christian ministry and outreach.

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART IN MINISTRY

The Missional Church

"In 1998, a book entitled *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* by Darrell L. Guder was the first work to introduce the concept of a Missional Church. The multi-authored book grew out of the Gospel and Our Culture Network, a group of professors and pastors that sought to bring the World Council of Churches' discussions of *missio dei* (the mission of God) and Lesslie Newbigin's missionary insights to bear on North America. According to *Missional Church*, the American church had been tied to a Christendom model of Christianity, wherein the church focused on internal needs and maintaining its cultural privilege in society. The decline of Christendom provided the church an opportunity, they said, to rediscover its identity as a people sent by God into the world as gospel witnesses."[1]

The deterioration of Christendom in the 21st century speaks to the critical need for the Church to analyze and remedy those issues that have led to the decline of the church's image, church membership, and participation in the various church ministries. Opportunistically the 'status quo' affords those churches willing and able to create change models is apparent. During this period of decline in church membership and participation,

[1]J. Todd Billings, *What Makes a Church Missional? Freedom from Cultural Captivity Does Not Mean Freedom from Tradition,* accessed July 15, 2014. http://www.christianitytoday.com /ct/2008/ march /16.56.html?paging=off, 2008.

the church is afforded with the prospect to re-imagine and redefine its current outdated models and implement state of the art models that are consistent with God's covenant and the philosophy embraced in the Missional Church.

J. Todd Billings, author of—*What Makes a Church Missional?* States, "In response to the perennial problem of self-absorption that plagues many congregations, everything the church ought to be and do is mission: Missions should not be one church program among many, but the church's core identity as witnesses sent by God into the world. Additionally, the author was not merely "redesigning the church for success in our changing context," or seeking a pragmatic "method and problem solving" approach to ministry. Instead, they sought to diagnose the cultural captivity of today's church, including its obsession with marketing and technique. More importantly, they painted a theologically rooted vision of the church as a community called to participate in God's mission in and for the world."[2]

Author John Fuder, suggested the role of the church requires that the church embrace the tenants of the Gospel and in particular the covenant with God to show compassion and perform outreach, not only internal to the church, but to help all of those in our communities with needs or the lesser advantaged.[3] However, as suggested by Guder, there are many challenges as well as opportunities to create highly functional models of Christian outreach, invigorating and expanding the role of the church.

Beyond the Walls: The Church's Role to Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Community, is the theme prayerfully selected for this dissertation and Outreach Model of

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[2]Ibid.

[3]John Fuder, *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 48.

Ministry. *Beyond the Walls* ... debunks the Christendom Model as Fuder defines it, and attempts to provide a model that allows the church to rediscover its identity as a people sent by God into the world as gospel witnesses. Moving beyond the walls of the church to help those in need and to spread the Gospel is paramount in creating a 21st century model for the Missional Church. However, the challenges of achieving a Missional Church Model are daunting.

Critical to the successful implementation of a new 21st century model of the Missional Church, is the eradication of two significant challenges that plague today's churches; self-absorption and the cultural captivity and/or obsession with social media and marketing. Even if there were a perfect model of the Missional Church, implementation would be severely impacted by the cognitive dissonance between the need to listen to the voice of I or Me versus God's word and the disconnect between the recognition of God's work versus the need to draw media attention [celebrity], individually and collectively.

The process of addressing self-absorption and cultural obsession is necessarily an extremely difficult and protracted process, because of the inherent tendency of people to resist change. Nonetheless, one should remain optimistic. Even in the face of these difficult challenges, there can be a paradigm shift through a carefully designed and narrated step-by-step method that over time, will facilitate a change in the thinking, thusly the narrative of the church and its congregants, while achieving a mindful focus on the true mission and purpose of the church as stated in the Gospels and leading-edge commentaries by well noted theologians.

In his book, *The Post-Black and Post-White Church: Becoming the Beloved Community in a Multi-Ethnic World,* Efrem Smith emphasizes the following. "Former multi-ethnic church pastor and current professor of evangelism Soong-Chan Rah states, that the church is in captivity. Rah shows us that the church cannot engage the culture to advance if it's enslaved to the values of the dominant culture."[4] Thus far, we are in agreement with the values that enslave the dominate culture in the United States: Individualism, Consumerism, and Materialism.

Rah further states, "In order for the church to engage the culture for transformation, it needs to embrace biblical values such as community, generosity, and bearing the burdens of others. The church can easily find itself in an internal battle between the values it desires to live out and the ones it actually does by being held culturally captive."[5]

Great responsibility resides with the church leadership and its missionary counterparts to emphasis the need and to take representative action whenever possible to educate, inform, and re-iterate the role of the Missional Church. *Situational Leadership* and *Leadership by Example* are important cultural elements among the various communication strategies that serve to reinforce the message of mission. Leadership and communication become important tools to use in transitioning the church away from the outdated Christendom model and shifting it toward the embrace of a Missional Church Model and philosophy.

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[4]Efrem Smith, *The Post-Black and Post-White Church: Becoming the Beloved Community in a Multi-Ethnic World* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 28, 29.

[5]Ibid, 29.

Noted author Alan J. Roxburgh shares our view on the difficulty of transforming current thinking to that of the Missional Church. He states, "Transforming Missional Church is not without its challenges. Innovating Missional Church is like sailing a turbulent ocean, or navigating new waters."[6] Roxburgh shares a five-stage Missional Change Model (MCM) as framework for transforming toward a Missional Church that is consistent with the communications and leadership strategies in the aforementioned and are as follow:

> Stage 1: Creating Awareness
> Through intensive communication events, both one-on-one and in groups, leaders take people through dialogue and discussion about the need for Missional transformation of the church. Stage of awareness can last from four to six months.
>
> Stage 2: Creating Understanding
> The dialogue and discussion serve to bring thinking and feeling modes of understanding together into a coherent pattern of understanding. Stage of understanding can last three to five months.
>
> Stage 3: Creating Evaluation
> What is currently happening in the congregation is evaluated in light of awareness and understanding. Stage of evaluation can last three to five months.
>
> Stage 4: Creating Experiments
> People begin to identify actions that they believe will move them toward becoming a Missional Church. The critical word is action. People will experiment through action. Without the time for experimentation, there can be no missional transformation. Stage of experiments can last three to eight months.
>
> Stage 5: Commit
> People commit to getting others involved in the process of moving through awareness to understanding, to evaluation, to experimentation, and finally to commitment.[7]

Beyond the Walls: The Church's Role to Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Community creates a successful Missional Church model not as a response to the

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[6]Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World,* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 81.

[7]Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World,* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006). 81, 105.

challenges of self-absorption and cultural marketing obsession, but rather introduces one of many possible models that serves the needs of the community, expands the church beyond the walls by going out into the community, and provides a compelling role model that is attractive without an excessive media focus. It calls for the support of church leadership and the involvement of church committees, project teams, focus groups, and partnership with external agencies that support the goals and objectives of the outreach efforts.

In the pages that follow, we will explore more opinions, observations, models, and examples offered by authors that expound upon the Missional Church Model and its philosophy, and the challenges presented by consumerism, individualism, and media obsession. This research will further serve to validate and support the actions noted in the project: *Beyond the Walls: The Churches' Role to Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Community.*

Missional Christians

"There are two competing postures for the people of God today: a church of consumers, demanding goods and services, and a church of missionaries, sent and sending into the world."[8] "The basic position the church needs to assume in the world is that of a missionary. To shift our understanding beyond consumerism and to grow a tribe of missionaries who understand their sentness, we need to practice six Missional postures that include: sent people, submerged ministry, shalom spirituality, safe places, sharing life, and standing in the gap."[9] The six postures are highlighted as follows:

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[8]Kim Hammond and Darren Cronshaw, *Sentness: Six Postures of Missional Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014) 11.

[9]Ibid. 25.

1) Sent people, understanding that God has a mission and that mission has a church.

2) Submerged ministry, following Jesus and moving among places and people

3) Shalom spirituality, seeking restoration for individuals, communities and all things

4) Safe places, for people from diverse backgrounds to find faith and community

5) Sharing life, forming teams around a common vision and strength of relationships

6) Standing in the gap, empowering pioneering leaders and Missional experiments

Sentness is further illustrated by JR Woodward who emphasizes that, "Individualism saturates American culture to the point that we no longer notice it. [In this context,] individualism tells us we can become more like Jesus by ourselves, through a self-help program or more effort. But the gospel tells us transformation happens as we embrace the work of the Spirit in our lives together." When we realize we are sent people, when we understand we are ambassadors of Christ, it shapes us for mission."[10]

A recurring and resounding theme appearing throughout this body of research, and as explained by Hammond and Cronshaw, consumer culture needs to shift away from consumerism to sentness; moving beyond the walls to serve humankind while embodying the teachings of Jesus(the Word incarnate); using Jesus as our role model of missionary. The church is Missional; in response to God's Word, we are sent to serve just as Jesus did. The church serves in a missionary posture or rather Missional Church.

Further, Hammond and Cronshaw cogently illustrate the need for inclusion of the greater community and diverse groups of people. The role of the church is to move

[10]Ibid., 30.

among the people as Jesus did extending the word of God and performing good deeds: sharing, caring, and restoration for individuals, communities, and all things.

Millions of dollars are spent each day to draw our attention to stuff we can buy. Some of us have houses filled with stuff we cannot use, do not really need, and stuff that consumes our time and effort rather than focusing on the needs of others. If we are preoccupied with acquiring goods and services, then we leave little to no time to focus on the necessary resources to build our communities.

The cell phone revolution is another example of consumerism that has stalled the evolution of the Missional Church. New technologies are introduced on a regular basis. Available time is spent texting, tweeting, posting to Facebook, taking pictures of ourselves, playing games, etc. In this age of technology, the communion with others, actually sitting and talking with others, has become a lost part of the church and of a rich culture of embrace and acceptance.

While information and technology can be valuable tools, there must be a reasonable expectation that this technology will not consume us or our duty to Christ as Christians. The cell phone revolution is but one facet of a growing trend that is contributing to the increasing levels of self-absorption, direct and subtle forms of isolation, and is preventing us from receiving the blessings of sentness that come from being with and responding to the needs of others. Outside of the Church and scattered non-profit agencies who will help our ships to rise?

We are so privileged in America to live in relative freedom and in communities that are envied throughout the world. People from other countries are willing to die to come to this country for a chance to live the lifestyles they perceive that we enjoy.

However, beneath the veneer of prosperity that is perpetuated by the Prosperity Gospel, our country is deeply divided between the haves and the have not' which is a universal shift in culture that does not bode well for the future security of our nation.

Enter the paradox of globalization that strives to modernize and harmonize the business and economic models of other countries with that of the US. Unfortunately, there is an underlying assumption in globalization that suggests; all peoples of the world can, if they work hard enough, become more like the US and that the problems of insufficiency, inequality, poverty, a lack of freedom, and many other ills, will disappear. Compounding this false notion is the fact that there are too few resources and scientific advancements to meet the needs of the entire world populations.

In the current geopolitical and economic climate today, the prosperity gospel should be exclaiming the virtues of gratefulness and the comforts of sufficiency, rather than the exploitative nature of consumerism and psychological manipulation by advertising and media outlets. What a blessing and a comfort, to have food and shelter, and to be able to rest your head comfortably in a bed with a pillow at night, especially when countless numbers of others go without food and have no shelter on a daily basis. Praising God for the gift of life and showing gratefulness by sharing what we have with others, even if that means we forego one day's cappuccino and donate that savings to provide relief for someone stricken by hunger for example, is a small price to pay in acknowledgement of the Lord's bounty we enjoy as privilege.

One solution to the growing phenomenon self-interest and consumption is for the world churches to abandon their own self-interests and find an appropriate philosophy to address envy and consumerism, while actively adopting measures, regardless of size, to

embrace sentness, and while vigorously working to develop and implement worldwide, models of the Missional Church. The emphasis on while indicates the need to implement changes, thinking and deeds, in a simultaneous or overlapping manner. Short-term or long-term, no step is too small toward this end. Optimistically, there are church organizations that practice sentness, however, little to no attention is drawn toward this effort and most of the actions including outreach, are internal to the organization or cultural entity.

Prior to the organization of the AME Church, the Free African Society (FAS) emerged as the center of community; a resource center with a primary focus to help community. The FAS provided assistance for the economic, educational, social, and spiritual needs of the African community.

Some 227 years later, the Vision of the AME Church states: "At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and to serve the needy. It is also the duty of the Church to continue training."[11]

Over the years, the demographics of communities in California, and throughout the nation in which AME Churches and other houses of worship reside, have changed to multi-ethnic populations, rather than any single ethnic group. This affords the AME church, and all houses of worship a great opportunity to extend beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to get involved in their culturally diverse communities; establishing relationships and responding to the needs of the community as a whole.

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[11] *The Doctrine and Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union Publishing Board, 2012).

In Robert M. Franklin's *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in the African American Communities*-sites the African proverb, "It Takes A Village" he believes that authentic restorative action happens at the local neighborhood level. The village metaphor may seem a bit odd for most of us who reside in or near cities. But it intended to jar us into thinking about how we can take responsibility for changing our communities for better. Neighborhoods become villages when all of the adults step-up to show care and concern for all of the children. Villages need real grown-ups. Moreover, the hard and slow work of healing and reconciling broken people and fractured relationships that will in turn restore larger institutions must begin with these grown-ups (no matter what age) inside local institutions. As he uses the term village, he is referring primarily to local neighborhoods and communities with predominantly black populations. Villages are the neighborhoods and communities in which all Americans reside."[12]

"In the final analysis, we all live in villages and we should all aspire to transform them into beloved communities. A village has a more intimate and inclusive emotional tone than its alternatives and requires justice as the precondition for peace, prosperity, and human fulfillment. Indeed, one of the reasons many village leaders fail to connect with the community is that in the words of a popular song by Carly Simon (and popular pain relief commercial), they "haven't got time for the pain."[13] The pain is all inclusive of the problems that plague our society and us as individuals and include examples such as but not limited to homelessness, social justice, poverty, and discrimination.

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[12]Robert M. Franklin, *Crisis in the Village: Restoring Hope in African American Communities*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 3.

[13]Ibid., 10.

From a Missional perspective, there are times we should mobilize and act to end the pain. A current and relevant leadership model is one represented by Reverend Dr. William Barber, President of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP and leader of the Forward Together Movement. Through Dr. Barber's leadership, he has mobilized and taken actions to end and/or minimize the pain related to social injustices, and in this scenario, to thwart the attempts by Right Wing to restrict voting rights. The intended voting rights restrictions are a source of pain for large groups of voters that include students, the elderly, and minorities. Without a voice in the democratic systems eer of voting, communities and individuals of all colors are subjugated to the decisions made by others that don't represent a collective voice.

"The NAACP estimates that 80,000 to 100,000 people gathered outside the North Carolina State Capitol Saturday morning [July 27, 2014] for the Moral March in Raleigh (official attendance numbers have not been released yet). The march was the culmination of a year of Moral Monday protests at the State Capitol organized by The Forward Together Movement, a fusion movement of over 150 groups fighting for mostly progressive causes in North Carolina."[14]

Leaders who are either unaware or uncomfortable with engaging and addressing, the pain of the people are unlikely to mobilize the power of the people. Underneath our pain lays our power. But someone must name our pain and guide us through the common pains and the occasional deeper traumas of human existence. Reverend Dr. Barber is leading by example, and is directly and indirectly inspiring others to think about ways in which they can improve their communities through righteousness and meaningful action.

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[14]Why Tens of Thousands of People Were Rallying in Raleigh, accessed July 24, 2012.http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/wp/2014/02/10/why-tens-of-thousands-of-people-were-rallying-in-raleigh/.

Whether denomination or non-denomination, the church's role is not only to minister within its walls, but to put the Word of God into action. Care and compassion for community is a response to God's word. Embracing community is a response to God's word. Action embodies scripture and is a response to God's word—*And the Word became flesh and lived among us.*[15] The people of God, called the church, are the salt of the earth, and the light of world; called to be a Missional Church, to serve community, to be visible (the light of the world), and to help others. If one examines the biblical narrative it would stand to reason that Missional Church is commissioned by God, as a response to scripture.

As we reflect upon the various archetypical churches within our communities, it is important to ask ourselves, and attempt to answer the following questions. Is their ministry primarily inside the walls or are they involved outside of their walls (external) into community as well? Has the church of the 21st Century gotten away from caring about our neighbor, our community? Is the church of the 21st Century one of individualism or communalism? Is the Prosperity Gospel model truly indicative of the Missional Church?

Rev. Dr. Cecil L. "Chip" Murray, senior fellow of the University of Southern California Center for Religion and Civic Culture asserts, "... the fellowship of Christians generally and the Black church specifically have an obligation beyond the walls of the sanctuary. Our endangered communities are lost unless the churches in their midst help to provision the journey toward a new life."[16] Murray further states, "The prosperity gospel

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[15]Jn 1:14.

[16]Cecil L. "Chip" Murray, *Twice Tested by Fire: A Memoir of Faith and Service* (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2012), 67.

must relate to the prosperity of the community and not simply to individuals who prosper."[17] In his article, "Self-Help and the Gospel," Greg Carey comments on self-help gospel (self-optimization gospel), in comparison to the sacrificial model of Jesus. Dr. Carey quotes a major televangelist's definition of self-optimization gospel as, "God loves you, and God wants you to thrive."[18] Dr. Carey says, "The self-optimization gospel sounds good on the surface, but it stands a long distance from the call of Jesus. The problem with the self-help gospel is that it focuses on our own individual needs without recognizing that Christ calls people to follow him. The problem with the self-help gospel is that is expects nothing from us. In the end, it leaves us unfulfilled. And it stands far removed from what it means to live in Christ."[19]

The assessment of Drs. Murray and Carey is timely and relative to the 21st Century church. It is the responsibility—no it is the call—of the church to be a good neighbor, to be involved in the life of the community. The church of the 21st Century cannot afford to be encapsulated, dummied down, or absent in a culture of individualism or self-optimization. Like Jesus, the bride of Christ—the church, is called to be a missionary, a Missional Church, one that is sent to extend the love of Christ through practice.

Renowned theologian and missiologist Darrell L. Guder says, "Rather than occupying a central and influential place, North American Christian churches are increasingly marginalized, so much so that in our urban areas they represent a minority

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Greg Carey, *Self-Help and the Gospel*, accessed July 15, 2014.http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ greg-carey/selfhelp-and-the-gospel_b_4220149.html.

[19]Ibid.

movement. It is by now a truism to speak of North America as a mission field. Our concern is the way that the Christian churches are responding to this challenge."[20] Because of this marginalization, the absence of the Missional Church can be seen throughout North American urban areas that were once thriving but have now been reduced to poverty, violence, and blithe. Detroit, once the dominant car manufacturer, and Detroit are just a few examples of marginalized societies and what the absence of the Missional Church means for its residents.

In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, the king's cup-bearer Nehemiah was compelled to leave the comforts of the king's palace after receiving a disturbing report about the wellbeing of his homeland. This was the impetus for leading his people in the rebuilding project. The diakonia, or service of the church is part of its spirit. Succeeding the kerygma or proclamation of God's word, one's natural response should be a life of diakonia, of helping others, especially the disadvantaged, "the poor and destitute, the marginalized, and downtrodden, or in biblical terms, "widows and orphans."[21] James Cone writes, "... the others for whom the church exists are the poor and not the rich, the downtrodden and oppressed and not the proud and the mighty. Because the church is a community called into being by the Crucified God, it must be a crucified church, living under the cross."[22] Nehemiah led just such a community in diakonia, in outreach ministry, in restoration, in renewal, and in the rebuilding of the walls of human lives. Like the early Christians, Nehemiah also was called to a spirit of community, rather

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[20]Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 2.

[21]Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 227.

[22]James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 124.

than a spirit of individualism and independence. In other words, the church is not about us, but about God's mission.

Despite changes in society and challenges to the theological doctrines of Christianity, the church as the center of community is critical to the survival to the communities in which they reside. In an era of the Great Recession, high unemployment, the subprime mortgage crisis, foreclosures, and for the first time an African American President, the church is still the glue that binds, empowers, and strengthens. The societal ills of racism, discrimination, injustice, inequality, poverty, and hunger continue to plague our communities. The voice of the Church is still needed, both inside and outside of the walls. The marginalized and people of color living on the edge, yearn for compassion, love, and leadership that is most likely to come from the church.

Dr. Marva Mitchell writes, "Church this is our day! We must rise up and take responsibility for the village. The government alone is unable to save the village. They are now turning to the Church for help, and the Church must take this responsibility. At the same time, the Church must turn to her Lord for a new empowerment and a fresh filling of His love. It is the Church who is called to be light to the world."[23] In other words, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."[24]

Theoretically, the AME Church should be able to resurrect its stated mission, in an effort to establish its Missional Church. "The Mission of the AME Church is to

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[23]Marva Mitchell, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Village* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2001), xxiii.

[24]Mt 28:19-21.

minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people."[25] As a community of faith born out of sociological differences rather than theological differences, the AME mission and theology is one of liberation and social justice. The prophetic and liberating gospel is preached through the lens of our experiences as a people, and calls us to respond to the social inequities and injustices plaguing our communities, the marginalized and disenfranchised. Our mission calls us to not only minister within the walls of the sanctuary, but also to move beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to minister to community—our extended congregation. African American churches have a long history of providing outreach ministries that provide service to the congregation and community at large. These outreach ministries address such social ills as: Poverty, Homelessness, Hunger, Affordable Housing, and Education to name a few.

The current day challenge for the AME Church, however, is to develop a force of committed leadership among its churches, necessary to carry out its mission. It is the hope of the AME Church that these outreach efforts will encourage others in the community to step forward and emulate its practices and join in the communion with an ever expanding and changing community of varied groups of people.

"The Apostle Paul (Rom 12:1, 2) tells us that the dominant culture shapes who we become. According to cultural theory, culture is largely made up of artifacts, language, rituals, ethics, institutions, and narratives. In other words, the language we live in, the

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[25] *The Book of Discipline of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville: TN, AME Sunday School Union Publishing Board, 2008), 16.

artifacts that we use, the rituals that we engage in, our approach to ethics, the institutions we are a part of and the narratives we listen have power to shape our lives profoundly."[26]

Shaping The Missional Church - Models, Philosophies, And Guidelines

As we look at the culture around us, we should attempt to identify narratives, philosophies, guidelines, and models that can be used to shape the future of the Missional Church. The following, offer insights and examples of some of the current-day thinking as we seek to envisage, rejuvenate, and/or develop our churches toward mission.

John D. Fuder's *A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community*[27] *identify* four principles drawn from the ninth and tenth chapters of Matthew's gospel will lead us from appropriate repentance to a godly response.

The first principle is to go where the need is (Mt 9:35).Jesus walked the streets and rubbed elbows with real people. He was not afraid to get close enough to see the need. We can follow Christ's example by finding ourselves where the needy are. When we get outside of our safe little worlds, down to where real needs are, we will find that compassion is a normal heartfelt response to pain and despair.

The second principle is that compassion is a response rather than a reaction, Matthew 9:38. The third principle for cultivating compassion is to recognize that biblical compassion is a commitment, not a convenience (Mt 1).

The fourth principle is that compassion takes people all the way to Christ (Mt 9:35). The Mark of Faith: In Matthew 25: 34-40, Jesus laid out this principle in bold relief: We are saved to glorify God, to spread the love of God so others will come to

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[26]J. R. Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 34.

[27]Fuder, *A Heart for the City*, 48.

know Jesus for themselves. We have been redeemed and created in God's image for the purpose of glorifying Him through the good works of our lives. In Ephesians 2:10, James also teaches us that authentic faith produces good works.

John L. Thompson"s *Urban Impact: Reaching the World through Effective Urban Ministry*[28] lists Seven Principles of Urban Ministry:

> Principle One - Urban ministry must be Incarnational.
>
> Principle Two - Urban ministry must be Intentional. We must be intentional in our approach to Scriptures. We must be intentional to our location.
>
> Principle Three - Urban ministry must be Personal.
>
> Principle Four – Urban ministry must be Cross-Cultural.
>
> Principle Five – Urban ministry must be characterized by Credibility and Integrity.
>
> Principle Six - Urban ministry must be characterized by Longevity.
>
> Principle Seven – Urban ministry must be Supernatural.

Joy Skjegstad shares *7 Creative Models for Community Ministry.* Skjegstad, defines community ministry as "any effort your church makes to connect with people and institutions outside the four walls of your church,"[29] and lists Seven Models for community ministry:

> Model 1
> Donate Goods or Money Collecting and sending money or material to aid the cause that your congregation cares about, i.e., school supplies, books, or food.
>
> Model 2 - Mobilize Volunteers
> Sending volunteers from your church to work with a nonprofit or other organization in your community, like the Boys and Girls Clubs or Habitat for Humanity, for example

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[28]John L. Thompson, *Urban Impact: Reaching the World through Effective Ministry* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 25-42.

[29]Joy Skjegstad, *7 Creative Models for Community Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2013), 4, 5.

Model 3 Partner with Other Organizations
A more full-fledged partnership with a nonprofit or other type of group in your community. Some options include sending volunteers, donating money or items, planning and delivering programs together, and sharing space

Model 4 Advocate around Public Policy
Working together as a congregation to advocate for public policy change on a particular issue, such as affordable housing or funding for public schools

Model 5 Engage in Community Organizing
Your church working side by side with community residents and other community organizations to produce change that gets at the "root" of community issues. This model might include actions like picketing or boycotting to address housing discrimination.

Model 6 Develop a Ministry Program
Developing your own program from the ground up-your church has the vision for the program and develops a plan, staffs the program with paid staff or volunteers, secures other resources like space and equipment, and is responsible for managing the program.

Model 7 Create a Church
Based Nonprofit Starting a separate 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization connected to your church that would serve as an umbrella for community ministry programs.

Skjegstad further encourages the church to, "Get out and meet your neighbors so that your ministry is designed to respond to actual community needs and is launched in partnership with people and organizations in the community."[30]

Heidi Rolland Unruh and Phillip N. Olson book, *Get There From Here: Starting Compassion Ministry in Your Congregation.* express, "Effective outreach takes vision, purpose, and planning. Vision is the conviction God is calling the church in a particular direction. Purpose unifies the congregation around the goals of the Kingdom. Planning

[30]Ibid.

lays out the steps to fulfill the vision."[31]The authors share three stages for effective outreach:

Stage 1: Laying the Foundation

Stage 2: Unleashing the Vision

Stage 3: Sustaining the Vision

Alan Hirsch"s *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* says, "A Missional Church is a church that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose as an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organizing principle is mission. When the church is in mission, it is the true church. The church itself is not only a product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community of faith that adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through his people."[32]

Alan J. Roxburgh's *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*[33] offers a series of nine steps your local church can take to initiate several groups for reconnecting with neighborhoods:

Step 1: Prepare the Local Church
Communicate with the Board; Communicate with the Church; Form Teams.

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[31]Heidi Rolland Unruh and Phillip N. Olson, *Get There From Here: Starting Compassion Ministry in Your Local Church*, accessed July 15, 2014., http://www.enrichmentjournal.ag.org /200402/200402_ 064_startcompmin.cfin.

[32]Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 285.

[33]Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2011), 181-190.

Step 2: Develop New Eyes for Your Neighborhood
Moving back into your neighborhood is about learning to see our community with a fresh set of eyes. To do this, people start to practice: 1. Dwelling in the Word around Luke 10:1-12 each time they meet together; and 2. Learning to walk through their neighborhood and ask new questions about what is happening there.

Step 3: Teach Radical Neighborliness
This step helps people move from the step of walking around their community to connecting with the stories of some people where they live.

Step 4: Map the Neighborhood
As people walk around, they start to develop fresh eyes and see what they may have taken for granted before. A helpful way to develop new eyes is to draw your own map of your neighborhood and share with one another the stories of what you're seeing.

Step 5: Listen to Neighborhood Stories
In connecting and building relationships in the neighborhood, people in the groups now want to listen to the stories shaping the lives of their neighbors. This is critical to hearing what God might be up to around us.

Step 6: Discern What God Is Up To in the Neighborhood
As we listen to stories, we may be able to discern what God is up to in the neighborhood. This is a new way of thinking about God, the gospel, and mission.

Step 7: Get Involved – To be the church is to be the hands and feet of Jesus.
The call to the neighborhood is a call to discover what God is already doing and become a part of it.

Step 8: Report-What Are We Learning?
At this point groups that are becoming involved in a neighborhood should share their experiences with the church, in ways that will invite others to join this journey.

Step 9: Commit-What Do We Do Next?
After the groups have shared with the board and the church, the final step is for the leadership to work with the whole church community in naming what it is learning about moving back into the neighborhood and determining the next steps it will take together on this journey.

Summary

The outreach ministry proposed by the Missional Church Models and authors cited, provide leading-edge and strategic thinking on approaches to transition from, the

old outdated Christendom model of Christianity, wherein the church focused on internal needs and maintaining its cultural privilege in society, to the God focused Missional Church Model.

It should be noted, however, that a critical component of the successful implementation of any model, is the need for an *engaged, enlightened, and empowered* leadership structure, preferably top to bottom of the hierarchy. The challenges of 21st century are daunting and command leadership that can respond to the complexities of integrating the Gospel with Missional Church action and leadership, and leadership that can also make sense of and address complex issues ranging from business management, marketing, strategy and planning, communications, psychology, sociology, and marketing to name a few. The successful implementation of a Missional Church Model will largely depend on the strength of the leadership and the willingness of all involved to embrace a continuous changing world and set of circumstances.

CHAPTER THREE

FOUNDATIONS

The essence of this doctoral project is most readily articulated in the form of a project theme, stated as follows: *To move beyond the walls to serve the community through Christian outreach ministries that inform, educate and empower. Moving beyond the walls will build collaborative partnerships between church and community and possibly increase church membership.*

The Great Recession has created an urgent need for the church and its ministries to call upon and leverage available resources, in an effort to collaborate, educate, and empower the church and its communities, and to improve upon our outreach efforts. A secondary, but equally important benefit of such outreach, is the opportunity to expand church membership while teaching and spreading the gospel of Christ. Moving beyond the walls of the church requires that we call upon organizations like Habitat For Humanity to address housing needs; Bread for the World as a means of providing food to those in need; the American Red Cross to educate and inform on emergency management services for both community and individuals, and so much more. Each of the aforementioned organizations and other like-minded groups provide essential services that benefit our diverse multi-cultural population segments and the individual. Meals on Wheels is another such example of a program that addresses the food and nutrition needs of our ever-expanding senior population.

Similar to establishing spiritual connections, partnering, and collaborating with agencies that are already in the business of doing the work to empower the needy, Christian outreach efforts and newly formed ministries are key to expanding our church ministry and its programs. Together, the church and its partnerships strengthen and create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, beyond the walls of the church, establishing and building relationships with the community—deemed our extended congregation.

Biblical Foundations

The biblical foundations most apt in supporting the project theme are found in the Old Testament scripture, Nehemiah 2:17-18 and in the New Testament scripture, Matthew 5:13-16. In attempting to demonstrate the parallels of informing, educating, and empowering, we will explore the leadership of Nehemiah who was actively engaged in the people and community and the restoration of Israel. We will also see the teachings of Jesus in Matthew illuminate a community in an otherwise dark world.

The book of Nehemiah is one of twelve Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible as are the books of Ezra and Esther that deal with Israel's restoration. In the book of Nehemiah, the walls of the city are restored. In the book of Ezra, the Jewish people were permitted to leave Babylonian exile and return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. In the book of Esther, the Jewish people were protected and delivered. In each of these instances, one can readily see how these activities work in tandem to create to rebuild communities while empowering and educating the people in the work to be done.

Highlighted in the references cited, Nehemiah is referred to as Ezra-Nehemiah and portions of the text of Nehemiah and Ezra overlap in each section; thus, giving the

appearance that Nehemiah and Ezra completed their respective tasks during the same period. "Each of the narratives imply, arrived at about the same time (Neh 12:26). Yet their activities seem to parallel one another while simultaneously ignoring, (or displaying a lack of awareness about) the other."[1] The translation of the Hebrew Bible into English and into separate books may explain this overlapping. Initially, in the Hebrew Bible, Nehemiah was one book titled Ezra-Nehemiah. The difficulty of extracting and transcribing text from one book into two separate books, may have led to minor distortions of a period in which the tasks were completed by each Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra began his work first and after some years, Nehemiah began his work. There was, however, a point in time where they were working on separate tasks but during the same time.

Harper's Bible Dictionary says, "In the Hebrew Bible, Nehemiah forms the second part of Ezra-Nehemiah. Chapters 8 and 9 continue the story of Ezra from Ezra chapters 7-10; this section is now enclosed within the Nehemiah narrative, though it is not entirely clear where the division is to be made. Thus, the book consists of several sections:

- Chapters 1-7, Nehemiah's commission and first governorship
- Chapters 8-9, Ezra's reading of the law and a psalm of distress
- Chapter 10, a new covenant
- Chapters. 11-13, the repopulation of the city of Jerusalem, dedication of the walls, and Nehemiah's second governorship.[2]

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[1]K. L. Noll, *The Biblical Seminar 83: Canaan and Israel In Antiquity: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd, 2001), 293.

[2]Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Harper's Bible Dictionary* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), 694.

Harper further states, "Various lists also appear whose relationship to their contexts is not entirely clear."[3]

Comparatively, author Tamara Cohn Eskenazi states, "Most English translations of the Bible separate it into two books: Ezra and Nehemiah, even though Ezra-Nehemiah constitutes a single book in the most ancient manuscripts and is best interpreted as such."[4] Ezra-Nehemiah is the only biblical book that attempts to give history of the crucial yet obscure postexilic era.

Nehemiah shares several characteristics with Ezra. Both Ezra (Ch. 1-6) and Nehemiah (Ch. 1-7) describe the return of exiles to Jerusalem to complete a rebuilding project. "Ezra is the work of the priesthood and limits the realm of the sacred to the Temple and the priests. Nehemiah, by way of contrast, is a lay composition that sees Torah as the focus of the sacred."[5] Ezra, the priest assigned to complete the rebuilding of the Temple, and Nehemiah, the layman is assigned to complete the rebuilding of the city walls. "Nehemiah alone directs work on the walls, the social reform and the repopulating of Jerusalem."[6] Authors Eskenazi, Miller and Hayes agree, "The most significant events in Jewish history during this period, at least from the perspective of the final editors of the Hebrew Bible, were the return of exiles from Babylonia, the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple, the refortification of the city of Jerusalem, and the attempts to reform

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Tamara Chon Eskenazi, "Ezra-Nehemiah," in *The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 116.

[5]Ralph W. Klein, "The Books of Ezra & Nehemiah," in *New Interpreter's Bible* vol. 3, Leander E. Keck, ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 664.

[6]Ibid., 665.

Judean life by two returning Jewish leaders from the Diaspora-Ezra and Nehemiah."[7] The setting for Nehemiah takes place during the Persian Era (539-331 BCE), around the late 5th Century. Nehemiah's activity is set in the twentieth year reign of a Persian ruler Artaxerxes I in approximately 445-432 BC. "Aramaic was the lingua franca of the Persian Empire and so undoubtedly the language in which official correspondence and official records were written."[8]

The name Nehemiah means Yahweh has comforted. "Much of the book consists of a first-person narrative, traditionally called the Nehemiah Memoir, recounting Nehemiah's role in constructing the walls of Jerusalem, expanding its population, correcting social abuses, supporting the worship life of the community, and guarding against any mixing with foreigners."[9] Both Harper's Dictionary[10] and *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*[11] agree, the book was narrated in the first person and is a memoir.

As we work toward our text, Nehemiah 2:17-18, we will see Nehemiah had a heart for his people and for his community. He put God first in all that he did. He was faithful, compassionate, and selfless. A bridge-builder between spirituality and community, Nehemiah was a civic leader, a community organizer, a community activist, a motivator, and a resourceful administrator highly favored by God. Thus, from the Biblical perspective, Nehemiah becomes the perfect example of the leadership that is

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[7]J. Maxwell and John M. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah, 2nd ed.* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 498.

[8]Klein, "The Books of Ezra & Nehemiah," 748.

[9]Ibid., 748.

[10]Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary,* 695.

[11]Maxwell and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah, 2nd ed.,* 528.

Nehemiah Chapter 2

"Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan (April – May), during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, Nehemiah was serving the king wine and King Artaxerxes noticed Nehemiah's sad countenance and asked Nehemiah, Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart" (Neh 2:1-2). Nehemiah explained, he is sad "because the city where his fathers are buried lies in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire?" (Neh 2:3). Nehemiah asks the king's permission to go to Judah and rebuild the city of his fathers. He also requests and receives letters to be given to the governors of the region for safe passage and for resources of timber to make beams for the gates, city wall, and his residence. Because Nehemiah was also a government official, the king also sent army officers and cavalry with him. Nehemiah found favor with the king and more importantly, Nehemiah was highly favored by God. God was with him.

However, not everyone was happy or supportive of Nehemiah's rebuilding mission. Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, along with the local people (Samaritans) who had settled in the city, were not in favor of Nehemiah's mission to repair the city walls and the lives of the Jewish people. Nay Sayers and dream killers are always in the midst of progress, working to keep things status quo for their own selfish benefit, rather than the benefit of many—the community.

Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem and three days later, he and a few others go out during the night to survey the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah did not tell anyone (including the city officials and Jewish leaders) about the plans God had put in his heart. He wanted first-hand knowledge of the condition of the walls and the people, so that he

could present credible plans for rebuilding while making sure he did not inform the opposition of his plans ahead of time.

We find in Nehemiah 2:17-18, Nehemiah is equipped with the plan and now shares his plan with the city officials and with the people.

> You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace! Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king." They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work.

Like Nehemiah, the Church should have a heart for the people inside and outside the walls of the Church. The church should not be complacent with the comforts inside the established structure of a building, but should be challenged to move beyond the walls to help the Community. Nehemiah was not just concerned for himself, nor was he satisfied with the security of the palace. Rather, Nehemiah desired to move beyond the palace—beyond the walls of comfort, beyond the walls of security, beyond the walls of status—to move out and lead the rebuilding efforts of a city in ruin, to give hope to those without hope and to bring honor to those ashamed of their conditions. This characterization closely aligns with the project goals and project theme, wherein the church ministry is motivated to extend its concern beyond the walls of the church, connecting with the community and tapping resources to help rebuild, inform, educate, and empower.

As Nehemiah was aware, we are our brothers and sisters keeper and the church is called by God to be concerned about humankind, to go beyond the walls, to reach out to the community and to the world. The mission of God's church is societal salvation not just individual salvation. By reaching beyond the walls, we help spread the good news of salvation, improve lives and help rebuild communities through collaborative partnerships, sharing of information, education and empowerment.

Nehemiah moved beyond the walls and reached out to the people (community); in turn, the people responded with receptive and motivated hearts to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah informed, educated, and empowered the people, therein, the thrust and the scope of this doctoral project. In this scenario and project, the church body and its outreach ministries will imitate and attempt to accomplish some of the same tasks that Nehemiah completed. Remaining aware of today's tenuous socio-economic-political climate, one could agree that it is just as hard, if not harder as it was in Nehemiah's time to overcome opposition from community naysayers and haters, and all of those opposed to change. Nevertheless, the church should be encouraged by the fact that, despite opposition, Nehemiah was able to rebuild the city walls in fifty-two days.

New Testament

While Nehemiah was driven into action with a focus more toward the physical aspects of rebuilding the city, Matthew 5:13-16 speaks to the omnipresence of God and the importance of spreading and believing in God's word; and the importance of a God-centered life which corresponds with actions resulting in good deeds. Using Matthew 5:13-16 as a metaphor, it complements the interpretation of the books of Nehemiah and provides a deeply rooted spiritual framework necessary to encourage cooperation and collaboration in expanding the church's outreach efforts.

The Gospel according to Matthew is the first book of the New Testament and forms the connecting links between the Old Testament and the New Testament because of its emphasis on the fulfillment of prophecy. "More than 400 years had passed since the last Old Testament prophecies, and faithful Jews all over the world were still awaiting the Messiah (Lk 3:15). Matthew wrote this book to Jews to present Jesus as King and

Messiah, the promised descendant of David who would reign forever (Is 11:1-5)." Matthew, also called Levi (Mk 2:14), "was appointed by the Romans to be the area's tax collector. Matthew, a Jew, collected taxes from citizens, as well as from merchants passing through town. Tax collectors were expected to take a commission on the taxes they collected, but most of them overcharged and vastly enriched themselves. Thus, tax collectors were hated by the Jews because of their reputation for cheating and because of their support of Rome."[12] A learned man, Matthew immediately left this lucrative career when Jesus called him to be one of his disciples.

Harper's Bible Dictionary says, "The gospel according to Matthew was most likely written about AD 90 by an unknown Christian who was most probably at home in a church located in or near Antioch of Syria. Although the apostle Matthew may have been active in founding the church in which this Gospel originated (9:9; 10:3), the author exhibits a theological outlook, command of Greek, and rabbinic training that suggest he was a Jewish Christian of the second generation (cf. 13:52)."[13] In *The Women's Bible Commentary,* Amy-Jill Levine concurs with this timeframe and location. Levine says, "The Gospel of Matthew was probably written around 85-90 CE and the proposed setting of this writing was Antioch in Syria." However, Levine also notes, "Recent studies suggest that the Gospel may have had a Palestinian, specifically a Galilean, origin."[14]

The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are considered parallel accounts of Jesus' life. William Barclay in his book, *The New Daily Study Bible: The*

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Achtemeier, *Harper's Bible Dictionary,* 613.

[14]Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew," in *The Women's Bible Commentary,* Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 252.

Gospel of Matthew, volume 1, states, "These three gospels each give an account of the same events in Jesus' life. There are in each of them additions and omissions; but broadly speaking their material is the same and their arrangement is the same. It is therefore possible to set them down in parallel columns, and so to compare them one with the other."[15] Barclay goes on to say, "The correspondence between the three gospels is so close that we are bound to come to the conclusion either that all three are drawing their material from a common source, or that two of them must be based on the third."[16]

Other scholars concur that the Gospel of Mark was actually the first account and that Matthew and Luke used the Gospel of Mark as their primary source. Carl R. Holladay writes, "At least three sets of sources lay before Matthew as he began composing his Gospel: the Gospel of Mark, the sayings source Q, and the material unique to Matthew-M."[17] In comparison, Bart D. Ehrman writes, "Mark was the first Gospel to be written; it was used by both Matthew and Luke. In addition, both of these Gospels had access to another source, called Q (from the German word for "source," Quelle). Moreover, Matthew had a source (or group of sources) of his own, from which he drew stories found in neither of the other Gospels. Scholars have simply labeled this source (or sources) M (for Matthew's special source)."[18]

Ehrman notes, "The Sermon on the Mount (Chs. 5-7) is the first of five major blocks of Jesus' teaching in Matthew (the others: Chs. 10; 13; 18; 23-27). We have seen

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[15]William Barclay, *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew,* vol. 1 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 1.

[16]Ibid., 1-2.

[17]Carl R. Holladay, *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament: Interpreting the Message and Meaning of Jesus Christ* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Publishing, 2005), 133.

[18]Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004), 84.

that Matthew appears to portray Jesus as a new Moses. Some scholars have suggested that this collection of his teachings into five major blocks of material is meant to recall the five books of the Law of Moses. If the Law of Moses was meant to provide divine guidance for Jews as the children of Israel, the teachings of Jesus are meant to provide guidance for his followers as children of the kingdom of heaven."[19] In comparison, Amy-Jill Levine writes, "Just as Moses, having survived the persecution in Egypt and having overcome the temptation to apostasy in the wilderness, ascended Mount Sinai to deliver divine instruction to the Hebrews, so Jesus, having been to the wilderness, ascends a mountain and delivers a law. And just as the first law was given to a community of homeless slaves, so Jesus' interpretation of that law addresses the descendants of those fugitives. Of particular concern, as the Beatitudes indicate, are those who have been disenfranchised and those willing to forgo leadership and elitist positions."[20]

In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew shows Jesus instructing the disciples in the message which was his and which they were to take to the people. Matthew chapters 5-7 are called the Sermon on the Mount because Jesus gave it on a hillside near Capernaum. Scholars agree, this sermon probably covered several days of preaching. In it, Jesus proclaimed his attitude toward the Law.

> You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men (Mt 5:13).

Interestingly, Barclay writes, "In the ancient world, salt was highly valued. In the time of Jesus, salt was connected in people's minds with three special qualities.

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[19]Ibid., 101.

[20]Levine, "Matthew," in *The Women's Bible Commentary,* 255.

1) Salt was connected with purity. The Romans said that salt was the purest of all things, because it came from the purest of all things, the sun and the sea. So, if the Christians are to be the salt of the earth, they must be examples of purity."[21]

2) In the ancient world, salt was the commonest of all preservatives. It was used to keep things (meat in particular) from going bad, and to hold putrefaction at bay. So, salt preserves from corruption. If Christians are to be the salt of the earth, they must have a certain antiseptic influence on life. Christians must be the cleansing antiseptic in any society in which they happen to be; they must be the ones who by their presence defeat corruption and make it easier for others to be good.[22]

3) But the greatest and most obvious quality of salt is that salt lends flavor to things. Food without salt is a sadly insipid and even a sickening thing. Christianity is to life what salt is to food. Christianity lends flavor to life.[23]

As Barclay illustrates and as Jesus uses this simile of salt to teach the disciples, Jesus also teaches and reminds the congregants of Brookins Community African Methodist Episcopal Church—that we are the salt of the earth; representatives of Jesus charged to be purifiers, preservers, and flavor in the community. Christians are charged with moving beyond the walls to spread the flavor and life of Jesus with our neighbor and our community.

Like Nehemiah moved beyond the comfort of the palace walls and shared a wealth of knowledge, information and skills with the community of Jerusalem, Brookins Community AME Church can move beyond the walls of comfort to spread the love of God, reach out to inform, educate and empower our neighbors and our community. Providing higher standards (purity), faith (preservation) and flavor of God (life) will restore, build, and improve both the community and the church. It is time for Brookins' to move to the next level, to not only be a congregation concerned with inside the walls

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[21]Barclay, *The New Daily Study Bible,* 137.

[22]Ibid., 138.

[23]Ibid.

(self) but to become more conscious of the community, and how we as a church can better share the message of Salvation beyond the walls. Otherwise, we become good for nothing, without flavor and unable to reach our full potential given to us by God. As the text illustrates Jesus teaching the disciples, his message is still relevant for us today— be the salt of the community; go beyond the walls and reach out to our extended congregation.

> You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Mt 5:14-16).

Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John that he is the light, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (Jn 9:5). Believers in Christ are reflections of his light, and are commanded to be the light of the world, to let the love of Jesus shine in our homes, on our jobs, in our communities and throughout the world. Jesus gave his life to save humankind, and his followers are to radiate his love and compassion to everyone we come into contact with. Barclay writes, "So, Christianity is something which is meant to be seen. Our Christianity should be perfectly visible to everyone. Further this Christianity should be visible not only within the Church. A Christianity whose effects stops at the church door is not much use to anyone."[24] In comparison, Boice writes, "…the Christian is described as a lamp or a candle. He gives forth light. But he does so only because he

[24]Ibid. 142.

first has been kindled by Jesus Christ."[25] Followers of Christ are not to be hidden or to minister only within the walls of the Church, but to go outside of the walls of the church as well, and spread the love of Jesus throughout our communities and throughout the world. Letting our lights so shine before men and women, lifts our savior and aids in dispelling darkness in a dark world.

As Nehemiah moved beyond the palace walls to aid his community, and as Matthew recorded the words of Jesus teaching the disciples to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, this project aims to assist Brookins Community AME Church to move beyond the walls to partner and collaborate with community, by spreading the light of Jesus through information, education, and empowerment.

Historical Foundations

The historical foundations link African American history and the establishment of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, its vision, mission, goals and objectives. Core tenets, central in the AME worship experience, are the subtext and repeated throughout this document – independent worship, self-help, self-reliance, and self-determination in Blacks.

Throughout the annals of African American history, the Black church is ever present and inextricably connected to its people and community. Like a family, the Black church has always played an integral part in the lives of its parishioners and community. Nurturing and promoting uplifting qualities such as self-help, self-reliance, and self-identity are a few of the Christian principals actualized, through the prophetic preaching

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[25]James Montgomery Boice, *The Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1972), 69.

of the Word of God, Leadership, and Community Outreach. Often seen as the center of community, the Black church is historically present in community—educating, informing, and empowering people. Assisting with burials needs, affordable housing, aiding the sick and elderly, promoting entrepreneurship—are outreach efforts that empower the marginalized to rise above the inequities of life.

In their book, *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, Lincoln and Mamiya write, "The Black Church has no challenger as the cultural womb of the Black community. Not only did it give birth to new institutions such as schools, banks, insurance companies, and low income housing, it also provided an academy and an arena for political activities, and it nurtured young talent for musical, dramatic, and artistic development. E. Franklin Frazier's apt descriptive phrase, "nation within a nation," pointed to these multifarious levels of community involvement found in the Black Church, in addition to the traditional concerns of worship, moral nurture, education, and social control."[26]

The emergence of the Black church led to the establishment of social and communal life in the newly emancipated African American community. Symbolic as a parental figure, the church regards the community as extended family. The two bodies, church and community, build unified relationships through collaboration and partnering, strengthening both to better affect change and improve the lives of African American's locally and nationwide. Crouch and Gregory write in *What We Love about the Black Church*, "The only other entities that compare to the Black church in significance to their communities are the New Testament Jewish synagogue and the African communal

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[26]C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 8.

systems. Passages such as Luke 2:5-40 and Acts 3:1-10 are examples of Jewish worldview that was holistic, not individualistic. Synagogues functions best when their communities are conditioned to survive, strive, and thrive."[27]

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest, independent Black church in the United States, is an indelible testimony of the Black church moving beyond the walls to aid and partner with Community. Throughout history, the AME Church demonstrates its presence at the center of community in its tireless efforts to liberate its people and shine as a beacon light and hope in the community. Born out of sociological differences rather than theological differences, the AME Church's historical foundation was laid by a free slave named Richard Allen, whose intent was for Blacks to worship independently and freely in the African American religious experience, and to instill self-help, self-reliance, and self-determination in Blacks.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Richard Allen, emerged during the period of the American Revolution and the first decades of the national government. It evolved at a time of great racial travail. The AME Church had a profound impact in educating and empowering blacks while erecting a place of worship where they could grow and serve God at an African Methodist Episcopal Meeting-house. Foundationally, the AME Church's emphasis and attention was more redemptive rather than doctrinal. Black slaves had endured years of the slave master's theology that was more oppressive than liberating. The slave master's theology that was more oppressive than liberating. The slave master's theology served to justify slavery, and therefore, perpetuated harsh and inhumane treatment of the black race. Inasmuch, the life, and work

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[27]William H. Crouch Jr., and Joel C. Gregory, *What We Love about the Black Church: Can We Get a Witness?* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2010), 111.

of Richard Allen were constructive contributions to organized developments among Negroes, positively impacting their social and economic endeavors.

Richard Allen was born a slave of Benjamin Chew in Philadelphia on February 14, 1760. Allen and his entire family (father, mother and four siblings) were later sold to slave owner Stokeley of Delaware and were relocated near the city of Dover. Converted to Methodism at the age of seventeen, Richard Allen joined the Methodist Society in his neighborhood and attended class meetings in the forest for several years. Slaves held church meetings in the forest because it was unlawful for them to meet anywhere in the state of Delaware at this time. These secret class meetings were known as the 'invisible institution.' The invisible institution consisted of slaves. Slaves who had some knowledge of the Bible and were free to express themselves in the African religious experience preached. E. Franklin Frazier writes, "Since all forms of organized social effort were forbidden among the slaves and in the absence of an established priesthood, the Negro preacher played the important role in the invisible institution of church among the slaves. The Negro preacher was called to his office and through his personal qualities achieved a position of dominance."[28]

Allen accepted his call to preach early in his youth and immediately began to preach, first to his family, then to his master, and finally to Blacks and whites throughout the region. His mother, siblings, and master were converted because of the value of the Christian life demonstrated by Allen. A product of a rural system of bondage, Richard Allen taught himself to read and write, and after much hard work, he managed to purchase his freedom for $2,000.

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[28]E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1963), 17.

After the pursuits of many trades and traveling, Allen finally arrived in Philadelphia at the age of twenty-six. "He was already known to the colored people of the city as a result of his previous visits, following the invitations of the elder in charge. He began preaching by appointment at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church at five o'clock in the morning and in the evening. He was soon aware of the opportunity for service among his people and he admitted that he saw a large field open in seeking and instructing his African brethren, who had been "a long forgotten people."[29]

Early in Richard Allen's ministry, he envisioned an independent house of worship for Blacks, where they could assemble, and worship in their own fashion, free of oversight by white's and their rubric. "As early as 1786 he saw the necessity for the erection of a place of worship for the Negroes of the city. When he first proposed this idea he met with opposition."[30] In comparison, Frazier writes, "When Allen observed in Philadelphia the need of the Negroes for religious leadership and an organization, he proposed that a separate church be established for Negroes. His proposal was opposed both by whites and Negroes."[31] In his Declaration of Independence, Richard Allen outlined three reasons for the separation:

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[29]Charles H. Wesley, *Richard Allen: Apostle of Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: Associated Publishers, Inc., 1935), 51.

[30]Ibid., 51.

[31]Frazier, *The Negro Church in America,* 27.

1) To prevent whites from being offended by the presence of Blacks at worship.

2) To prevent Blacks from getting a distorted view of Christianity and especially its understanding of the nature of humanity.

3) To help uplift the race from the degradation of its slave past."[32]

"In the face of resolute opposition from both Blacks and whites, he never gave up the dream of a self-sustaining Black congregation."[33]

Continuing to preach, teach, and conduct prayer meetings at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, Allen observed an increase in attendance by Blacks and soon had a society of forty-two members, who were associated with Methodists. Richard Allen was known as their leader, teacher, and preacher. As the number of Blacks increased, Blacks began to feel much cramped in the space they were allotted while whites frustrations peaked as they felt the increasing number of slaves was a nuisance in the house of worship.

Because of an incident in a worship experience, Allen was convicted and finally moved to do something about the mounting unacceptable treatment toward Black slaves in the context of worship. On one occasion when Allen's friend, Absalom Jones was kneeling to pray one Sunday, a white trustee forced Jones to his feet in an effort to move him out of the area reserved for whites to pray. Shortly thereafter, Jones, Allen, and other Blacks as a body, left the church in protest of the racial injustice. "For these and various other acts of unchristian conduct, Allen and Jones considered it their duty to devise a plan in order to build a house of their own in which they could worship God under their own

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[32]Peter J. Paris, *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 40- 41.

[33]Gayraud Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 81.

vine and fig tree."[34] The St. George walkout would eventually lead to the first African church in America.

On April 12, 1787 Richard Allen, Absalom Jones and other Negro members organized the Free African Society (FAS), America's first independent organization established by Blacks for Blacks. Monthly meetings were initially held in Richard Allen's home, but as membership increased, other meeting locations were arranged to accommodate the growing numbers. FAS were a nonsectarian society, which provided aid and spiritual encouragement to Philadelphia's African American communities. The initial focus of the FAS was to support one another in sickness, benefit their widows and fatherless children and assist with the burial needs of the community. Richard S. Newman writes, "Most white communities denied Blacks access to public graveyards, or education, or any number of civic opportunities, communalism became absolutely critical to free Blacks."[35] "The Free African Society was dedicated to community action without regard to religious tenants. Members pledged to support one another in sickness, and for the benefit of their widows and fatherless children, provided they live an orderly and sober life. The FAS became a model institution, not just for Afro-Philadelphians but for Black communities around the country."[36]

As stated, the primary focus of the FAS was not one of religion but rather; it coalesced around the community and instituted the objective of self-respect, self-reliance, and self-determination. Over time, as black churches emerged, Frazier writes: "Many of

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[34]*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union, 2008), 5.

[35]Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2008), 61.

[36]Ibid., 60-61.

these beneficial societies, like the Free African society, were connected with churches. These societies continued to be established throughout the nineteenth century."[37] In comparison, Wilmore records, "...in many respects the Free African Society, which represented the first bid for independence among Blacks in the North, resembled an organized church without actually being one."[38] Allen and Jones "...created, therefore, the classic pattern for the Black church in the United States-a pattern of religious commitment that has a double focus: free and autonomous worship in the Afro-American tradition, and the solidarity and social welfare of the Black community."[39]

Over the next several years, Richard Allen continued to work with the FAS in the face of opposition from the FAS, because of his religious interests, especially his inclination to follow Methodism rather than another religious faith or the objects of a mutual society alone. Additionally, he continued to face opposition from the Methodist Episcopal Church with its large colored membership. Allen's desire and passion for a free, independent African church continued to burn within his heart and was his primary mission. Finally, Allen was blessed with the friendship and support of Dr. Benjamin Rush and Mr. Robert Ralston who supported Allen's vision. Allen says when describing the efforts of these two men, "Dr. Benjamin Rush and Mr. Robert Ralston will never be forgotten among us. They were the first two gentlemen who espoused the cause of the oppressed, and aided us in building the house of the Lord for the poor Africans in

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[37]Frazier, *The Negro Church in America,* 35.

[38]Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism,* 82.

[39]Ibid., 82-83.

worship."[40] This was the rise of the first African Church in America. Allen firmly believed Methodism was the best denomination for Blacks and the common people. Newman writes, "For Allen, Methodism was the religion for plain and simple (even unlettered) people. The reason that the Methodist is so successful in the awakening and conversion of the colored people, he explained, was the church's plain doctrine. It had also been the denomination associated with his liberation."[41] Allen felt, "All other denominations preached so high flown that we were not able to comprehend their doctrine."[42]

In 1791, Allen purchased land in Philadelphia at Sixth and Lombard Streets in anticipation of the African Church. The land was close to the homes of the people, and Allen wanted to stay in close proximity to the common people. "This decision on Allen's part was another indication of his vision of the people's needs and their probable response to this plans."[43] This site would eventually become the home of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the land where the church resides to this day.

Richard Allen organized the Bethel Church for which an old frame building was purchased (formerly occupied as a blacksmith shop), and formally dedicated on July 29, 1794. On June 11, 1799, Richard Allen was ordained a deacon by Bishop Francis Asbury, thus becoming the first Negro in the United States to receive an ordination from the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. On April 11, 1816, Reverend Richard Allen

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[40]Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen,* (Philadelphia, PA: Martin & Boden, 1833), 14.

[41]Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen,* 71.

[42]Wesley, *Richard Allen: Apostle of Freedom,* 72.

[43]Ibid., 75.

was consecrated the first Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the AME Church reached its organized existence as a connection in the same year.

Through the vision of Richard Allen and his concern for his people to have free expression, free religion and freedom to be able to utilize their God given talents, he opened avenues for men and women to serve in leadership roles in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He licensed, ordained, and affirmed through training, men, and women in ministry. "Allen did not plan a segregated church. What he planned was a church where Negroes could enjoy full participation, human respect and dignity and thereby develop themselves through personalities as men."[44]

In 1793, during a dreadful epidemic of yellow fever, Jones and Allen led other Blacks in providing aid to the entire population of Philadelphia. This was part of their compassionate heart as ministers and as outlined in *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.* It is incumbent upon the church to attend to the spiritual welfare of the community, while also attending to the healthcare of the community at-large. The life of Richard Allen set in motion new forces in social uplift, education, business, and public life where Negroes began to feel their own way. They were not only to be led by others, but they would lead themselves. As Allen's life grew short, his leadership gave way to younger and more vigorous hands. While conferences on religious matters were to continue, they would be held in tandem with conventions on political, social, and economic matters.

Allen was known to his congregation for quoting the phrase, "The Africans must learn to help themselves." For a Negro to adopt the spirit of independence in the

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[44]Howard D. Gregg, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AMEC Sunday School Union, 1980), 29.

eighteenth century, to organize the first Negro local church, and then establish a connection upon the same basis, was a unique and unheard of accomplishment. For this purpose, it took a man of courage. Allen had courage in such measure that he could fight through the years without faltering.

The purpose in mind of the founding father of African Methodism was among other things, to exemplify in Black men and women the power of self-reliance, self-help, and exercise of free religious thought with executive efficiency. Hence, the spirit of the AME Church and its practices have been, at all times and places, to encourage fraternal and economic organizations among the Black race; so that, upon any proper occasion, the church throws open her churches and halls for funerals, anniversaries, and conventions. "The Negro church, was not only the organization that had created cohesion among the slaves but it was also the basis of organized life among the Negroes who were free before the Civil War and among the freedmen following Emancipation. Moreover, it had set the pattern for organized social life among Negroes."[45]

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the lives of African Americans improved, much of which is attributed to the efforts of the Black church partnering with community to promote self-help, self-reliance, and self-determination values, in addition to being a social support network. With the emergence of the new African American middle class, the emergence of mega-churches and a revival of prosperity gospel, conversations have materialized whether or not the Black church is still the center of community. Thus, raising a number of important questions surrounding critical issues like, whether or not the Black church still feels a need to move beyond the walls of the sanctuary to aid community (the extended family) in social justice, self-help,

[45]Frazier, *The Negro Church in America,* 48-49.

self-reliance, and self-determination partnerships. Is the focus of the Black church today primarily within the walls? In a selfish, individualistic society, has the Black church lost its historical commitment to reach beyond the walls to serve community? These and other questions beg answers.

Just as emancipated slaves left the rural south and migrated to the urbanized north for a better life, African Americans have benefited from the Civil Rights Movement in terms of education, six-figure salaries, and upper social strata. Concurrent with societal changes questions arise as to whether or not the revival of prosperity gospel is a factor in the decreased relationship between the Black church and community. Dr. Michael Eric Dyson writes, "Today's prosperity gospel reflects earlier trends in twentieth-century theological materialism, termed the gospel of health and wealth, which emerged in the late 1920s, '30s, and '40s. I think one explanation for its revival is the attempt of new members of the upper middle class to offer theological grounds for their success without feeling guilty, or responsible, for those left behind. As a result, we get a materialistic, not a material, religion."[46] Comparatively, Dr. Cecil L. Murray, former senior pastor of First AME Church, Los Angeles writes, "Prosperity gospel preachers have honed their skills to the maximum, dangling before hungry people the bread of opulence, moving their own residences to the top of the hill, riding in latter-day chariots, protecting themselves with buffed-out body guards, using armor bearers to carry their ministerial accouterments and justifying the whole drama with a sense of entitlement."[47]

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[46]Michael Eric Dyson, *Can You Hear Me Now?* (New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books, 2009), 26.

[47]Cecil L. "Chip" Murray, *Twice Tested by Fire: A Memoir of Faith and Service* (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2012), 68.

Dr. Frederick D. Haynes, III, senior pastor of Friendship-West Baptist Church (a mega-church) in Dallas, Texas says, "He is committed to the ministry of social justice. He is committed to challenging people to think. Jesus was preoccupied with the plight of the impoverished. If we are not, then we are as greedy as the people that got us into this situation."[48] Dr. Murray states, "The fellowship of Christians generally and the Black church specifically have an obligation beyond the walls of the sanctuary. Our endangered communities are lost unless the churches in their midst help to provision the journey toward a new life. Personal salvation must be a piece with societal salvation, or the community is filled with empty hands, and hearts and souls and minds, reaching up in praise as recreation, not re-creation. The prosperity gospel must relate to the prosperity of the community and not simply to individuals who prosper. In truth, the belief that "God wants you to have it" relates not just to the community of believers but also to the community of humanity."[49]

Despite changes in society and challenges to the theological doctrines of Christianity, the church as the center of community is critical to the survival of the Black church and its communities today. In an era of the Great Recession, high unemployment, the subprime mortgage crisis, foreclosures, and for the first time an African American president, the church is the glue that binds and strengthens, historically and today. The societal ills of racism, discrimination, injustice, inequality, poverty, homelessness, and hunger continue to plague our communities. The voice of the church is still needed beyond the walls. The marginalized and people of color living on the edge, yearn for

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[48]Mashaun D. Simon, Do Black Churches Push Prosperity at Expense of Social Justice? October 28,2011, accessed June 4, 2012, http://thegrio.com/2011/10/28/do-black-churches-push-prosperity-at-expense-of-social-justice/.

[49]Murray, *Twice Tested by Fire*, 67.

compassion, love, and leadership that is most likely to come from the Black church. Dr. Marva Mitchell writes, "Church this is our day! We must rise up and take responsibility for the village. The government alone is unable to save the village. They are now turning to the church for help, and the church must take this responsibility. At the same time, the church must turn to her Lord for a new empowerment and a fresh filling of His love. It is the church who called to be light to the world."[50]

The nature and mission of the AME Church, as outlined in *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church,* is to fully identify with the poor and the oppressed in their struggle for human dignity. Further, this participation in human development is not optional, nor is it an addendum to an already crowded agenda. It must be the very heart of the life and work of our church. The liberation message of self-help, self-reliance, and self-determination started by Richard Allen, is still a very relevant message. A universal message, not only for African Americans, but a universal message which embraces, welcomes and speaks to all multi-cultural communities disenfranchised today.

> The Mission of the AME Church is to minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people. The AME Church has, for over two hundred years, challenged and fought the enemies of justice, freedom, and for all people. It has affirmed and defended primarily, of course, the rights of the Black and oppressed people to whom it gave identity and opportunity, but its scope of concern and action was and is as limitless as the Christian religion, hence its motto: God our Father, Chris our Redeemer, the Holy Spirit our Comforter, Humankind our Family."[51]

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[50]Dr. Marva Mitchell, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Village* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2001), xxiii.

[51]*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union, 2008), 1.

Howard Thurman writes, "Religious experience, community, and the self—all three—are places where God is met and revealed. All three are places where God is met and revealed. All three are places of discernment for God's dream for us. All three are places where God's assurance enables life to be lived fully, faithfully, and with joy."[52] Comparatively, Daniel Migliore writes, "While flawed and always in need of reform and renewal, the church is nonetheless the real beginning of God's new and inclusive community of liberated creatures reconciled to God and to each other and called to God's service in the world.[53] Brookins Community AME Church moving beyond the walls to collaborate and partner with Community, to inform, educate and empower through Christian outreach ministries is our call and our heritage, to be church as center of community.

Theological Foundations

Christian theology informs the historical significance and importance of ecclesiology, "the branch of theology that is concerned with the nature, constitution, and functions of a church."[54] By contrast, Christian theology is the enterprise, which seeks to construct a coherent system of Christian belief and practice. The nature of the church is as defined is one of serving others, in this wise, the church as an ecclesiological body through mission has as its purpose to do the work of ministry by reaching beyond the walls of the church to meet the needs beyond itself. The Great Commission of Jesus

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[52]Howard Thurman, *Howard Thurman: Essential Writings*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 33.

[53]Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 249.

[54]The American Heritage Dictionary, fourth edition, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Christ compels the church to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing then in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). This is based primarily upon the texts of the Old Testament and the New Testament as well as the historic traditions of Christians. Christian theologians use biblical exegesis, rational analysis, and argument to clarify, examine, understand, explicate, critique, defend or promote Christianity."[55]

Substantively, a combined knowledge of Christian theology and ecclesiology allow us to develop a comprehensive view of the evolution of the church, its covenant with God, its practices, and doctrines. This document benchmarks key elements within the ecclesiological framework, and provides us with a better understanding of the origins and evolution of the church.

Ecclesiology usually refers to the theological study of the Christian Church. However, when the word was coined in England in the late 1830s, it was defined as the science of the building and decoration of church buildings and it is still, though rarely, used in this sense. In its theological sense, ecclesiology deals with the church's origin, its relationship to Jesus, its role in salvation, its polity, its discipline, its destiny, and its leadership. Since different ecclesiology give shape to very different institutions, the word may also refer to a particular church or denomination's character, self-described or otherwise—hence phrases such as Roman Catholic ecclesiology, Lutheran ecclesiology, and ecumenical ecclesiology.

The roots of the word *ecclesiology* come from the Greek ἐκκλησίᾱ, *ekklēsiā* (Latin ecclesia) meaning "congregation, church" and -λογία, *-logia*, meaning words,

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[55]Christian Theology, accessed June 18, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian _theology #Ecclesiology:_Church.

knowledge, or logic, a combining term used in the names of sciences or bodies of knowledge. Its first appearance in print, as *ecclesiology*, was in the quarterly journal "The British Critic" in 1837, in an article written by an anonymous contributor who defined it thus: We mean, then, by Ecclesiology, a science which may treat of the proper construction and operations of the Church, or Communion, or Society of Christians; and which may regard men as they are members of that society, whether members of the Christian Church in the widest acceptation of the term, or members of some branch or communion of that Church, located in some separate kingdom, and governed according to its internal forms of constitution and discipline.

Ecclesiology seeks to flush out and define the eight [8] questions listed below by articulating a basic understanding of each question. It should be noted, however, that some of the questions presented and corresponding analyses overlap contextually and therefore is not necessarily expansive, like the narratives in the biblical texts. For example, James H. Cone, theologian, states, "To ask; what is the church is also to ask, "Who is Jesus?" for without Jesus the church has no identity." Analogously, the answer to one question may be already contained in the answer to another question.

1. *Who is the Church?* Is it a visible or earthly corporation or a unified, visible society—a "church" in the sense of a specific denomination or institution, for instance? Or is it the body of all believing Christians (see invisible church) regardless of their denominational differences and disunity? What is the relationship between living Christians and departed Christians (the "cloud of witnesses")—do they (those on Earth and those in Heaven) constitute together the Church?

2. *What is the relationship between a believer and the Church?* That is, what is the role of corporate worship in the spiritual lives of believers? Is it in fact necessary? Can salvation be found outside of formal membership in a given faith community, and what constitutes "membership?" (Baptism? Formal acceptance of a creed? Regular participation?)

3. *What is the authority of the Church?* Who gets to interpret the doctrines of the Church? Is the organizational structure itself, either in a single corporate body, or generally within the range of formal church structures, an *independent vehicle* of revelation or of God's grace? Or is the Church's authority instead dependent on and derivative of a *separate and prior divine revelation external to the organization*, with individual institutions being "the Church" only to the extent that they teach this message? For example, is the Bible a written part of a wider revelation entrusted to the Church as faith community, and therefore to be interpreted within that context? Or is the Bible the revelation itself, and the Church is to be defined as a group of people who claim adherence to it?

4. *What does the Church do?* What are the sacraments, divine ordinances, and liturgies, in the context of the Church, and are they part of the Church's mission to preach the Gospel? What is the comparative emphasis and relationship between worship service, spiritual formation, and mission, and is the Church's role to create disciples of Christ or some other function? Is the Eucharist the defining element of the rest of the sacramental system and the Church itself, or is it secondary to the act of preaching? Is the Church to be understood as the vehicle for salvation, or the salvific presence in the world, or as a community of those already "saved?"

5. *How should the Church be governed?* What was the mission and authority of the Apostles, and is this handed down through the sacraments today? What are the proper methods of choosing clergy such as bishops and priests, and what is their role within the context of the Church? Is an ordained clergy necessary? Who are the leaders of a church? Must there be a policy-making board of "leaders" within a church and what are the qualifications for this position, and by what process do these members become official, ordained "leaders"? Must leaders and clergy be "ordained," and is this possible only by those who have been ordained by others?

6. *What is the role of 'the Sacraments'* in the life of the church?

7. *How does the Church's New Covenant relate to the covenants* expressed in scripture with God's chosen people, the Jewish people?

8. *What is the ultimate destiny of the Church* in Christian Eschatology?"[56]

The discussion hereafter will enable us so that we may apply the tenants and concepts from ecclesiology and develop a better understanding of the church at-large and more specifically the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

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[56]Wikipedia, accessed June 23, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiology.

Who Is The Church?

The early church demonstrated acts of compassion, caring, and sharing for one another as community. They came together out of their common love for God, the apostles' testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and looked out for one another; to the extent there was not a needy person among them. After selling all they owned, they brought the proceeds, to be distributed as any had need. They shared with one another, looked out for one another, and cared for fellow humankind as they had need.

> Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned land or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:32-37).[57]

While many gave of themselves, it was sometimes difficult and challenging to encourage giving by all. In Acts chapter 5:1-11, Ananias and Sapphir did not give all of their possessions, and withheld a portion of their land proceeds. Their greed, deceit, and dishonesty, cost them their lives, and is a reflection of humanities sinful nature. Yet, in the early church as in the church today, greed, deceit, and dishonesty are often all too common character traits in civilization that thwart or challenge the church in providing for the needs of the community and those of lesser fortune. While the sharing of resources is part of the ethos of the early church and most Christian societies today, it is not an easy task motivating people to share and give of themselves.

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[57]Revised Standard Version of the Bible (NRSV). Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references will be from NRSV.

In comparison with the early church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, historically and today, is ever present and inextricably connected to its people and community. Like a family, the AME Church has always played an integral part in the lives of its parishioners and community. Nurturing and promoting uplifting qualities such as self-help, self-reliance, and self-identity in an attempt to strengthen the covenant with God through Christian principals actualized via the prophetic preaching of the Word of God, Leadership, and Community Outreach. Often seen as the center of community, the Black church is historically present in community—informing, educating, and empowering people. Assisting with burials needs, affordable housing, aiding the sick and elderly, promoting entrepreneurship, which are all outreach efforts that empower the marginalized to rise above the inequities of life.

What Is The Relationship Between A Believer And The Church?

Simplistically, the word ecclesiology can be defined as the work of Christ in the world. Ecclesiology answers the question, what does it mean to be the church? Ekklesia is derived from the Greek word ekklesia and translates into, the Christian church. The term stems from a verb kaleo (to call) plus the posit ek (out of). Interpreted, "the called out ones." "The New Testament term ekklesia provides an important link between the church of Jesus Christ and the Old Testament nation of Israel. The Hebrew scholars that translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint), chose ekklesia to render the Hebrew word qahal (assembly), which the historical writers used to refer to Israel as the *congregation* or assembly of the Lord (Dt 23:1ff; I Chr 28:8). Ekklesia connoted an

assembly, the citizens of a given community called together to tend to city affairs (Acts 19:32, 39, 41)."[58]

Called out of the world by the preaching of the gospel, and their shared commitment as disciples of the Lord, the early Christians established church in households. "They congregated in private homes. Women, men, and families invited the followers of Jesus into their homes to break-bread, share a cup of wine, and enter into a fellowship and communion with one another and with God."[59] There were no buildings, organizations, or denominations deemed the church. The Christian community comprised the spirit of the people—God's covenant people, called the church. "As the early church father Hippolytus declared, "It is not a place that is called church, not a house made of stones and earth… It is the holy assembly of those who live in righteousness. Expressed theologically, the church is a people in covenant."[60]

The theological doctrine takes the church at its word. The New Testament church believed in their hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead. They were a people bound together by their faith in God, the resurrected Lord Jesus, and brought together by the Holy Spirit. The operative condition covenant people is important in establishing the context for ecclesiology. Theologian Stanley Grenz, describes, a covenant people[61] as follows. "Covenant people, are people of God, bound together in fellowship by our covenant. Made in the image of God, which is love. God gave His only begotten Son

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[58]Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 464-465.

[59]Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 207.

[60]Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God,* 464.

[61]Ibid., 464-465.

because he loved His covenant people. The church is to go and spread the good news with all."[62] "Jesus is the foundation of the church, both from a historical perspective, in the group of followers He left behind, and from a theological perspective as the Resurrected One. Jesus lies at the very center of the Christian church; the church rests on its foundation in Jesus."[63]

Theologian James Cone writes, "The Christian church is that community of people called into being by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The beginning and the end of the church's identity is found in Jesus Christ and nowhere else. He is the subject of the preaching, and he embodies in his person the meaning and of its mission in the world."[64] Cone further comments, "To ask, "What is the church? Is also to ask, "Who is Jesus?" for without Jesus the church has no identity. Thusly so, Paul referred to the church as the body of Christ and it is why so many theologians, past and present, adhere to the claim that every ecclesiological statement is at the same time a Christological statement."[65] Hymnist Samuel J. Stone, accurately penned the profound words: "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord."[66]

Easily identified as an overarching theme of the Bible, and in the ecclesiological framework, the covenant, and therefore Christianity, dictates that humankind love one another, that we look after and care for each other—specifically those without the

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[62]Ibid.

[63]Jones and Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach,* 210.

[64]James H. Cone, *Speaking the Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1986), 115.

[65]Ibid., 111.

[66]Samuel John Stone, "The Church's One Foundation," accessed July 8, 2013 http://www. bartleby. com/294/430.html.

necessary resources to care for themselves. God lies at the heart of Christian theology, which in simple terms means, the study of God. If one studies God and the attributes and characteristics of the Sovereign Being, it becomes evident that God is concerned for all creation, and further, intends for humankind to share in like manner, inasmuch as, we are created in the Holy One's image. Again, the covenant of Christianity comes into view as Christians are bound by their belief in God and the teachings of Jesus to be God-like.

Unlike the early church, today Christians build and congregate in physical structures and buildings, on specified days or dates. The logistics of preaching, teaching, and caring for the less fortunate, in some cases, seems to present challenges for today's church in keeping its covenant with God. Nonetheless, the AME Church continues to minister to the spiritual and physical needs of its community through its outreach programs. A communal gathering site, often viewed as the center of community, the church is the cultural center of many communities. In addition to serving as a house of worship, the church as a cultural center serves for fellowship, for breaking of bread, tutoring children, a political forum to address Civil Rights and social justice issues, i.e., racism, discrimination, education, voter education and registration, to name a few. The early church in the Book of Acts was also a place that people came to have their spiritual and temporal needs met.

Despite changes in society and challenges to the theological doctrines of Christianity, the church as the center of community is critical to the survival of the Black church, and its communities today. In an era of the Great Recession, high unemployment, the subprime mortgage crisis, foreclosures, and for the first time an African American president, the church is still the glue that binds, empowers, and strengthens. The societal

ills of racism, discrimination, injustice, inequality, poverty, and hunger continue to plague our communities. The voice of the Church is still needed, both inside and outside of the walls. The marginalized and people of color living on the edge, yearn for compassion, love, and leadership that is most likely to come from the Black church. Dr. Marva Mitchell writes, "Church this is our day! We must rise up and take responsibility for the village. The government alone is unable to save the village. They are now turning to the church for help, and the church must take this responsibility. At the same time, the church must turn to her Lord for a new empowerment and a fresh filling of His love. It is the church who is called to be light to the world."[67]

It is the hope of the AME Church that these outreach efforts will encourage others in the community to step forward and emulate its practices and join in the communion with an ever expanding and changing community of varied groups of people.

What Is The Authority Of The Church? And, What Does The Church Do?

Throughout the world, there are many different basic metaphors or images that refer to the church. Among the many images of the church in the New Testament are the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27), salt of the earth (Mt 5:13), the bride of Christ (Eph 5:23-32), the household of God (Eph. 2:19), and God's own people (1 Pt 2:9), to name a few. Daniel Migliore states, "From the rich inventory of New Testament imagery of the church, four major clusters may be identified,

1) *The people of God* – The church is not primarily a building or an organization but a people, a community, and specifically the people of God who have been called by God. A basic function of this constellation of images is to connect the Christian community to the historic Israelite community of God based on

[67]Dr. Marva Mitchell, *It Takes a Church to Raise a Village* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Destiny Image Publishers, Inc., 2001), xxiii.

the covenant promises and to describe this people as an exodus, pilgrim community, a people called out for a special task.

2) *Servant people* – Just as the Lord of this community is a servant Lord, so the community called by God is to be a community of servants. The people of God are co-workers, helpers, ambassadors, and witnesses. These two aspects of the service of the church are integrally related, as in Jesus' twofold commandment to love God with our whole heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

3) *Body of Christ* – The community participates in one Lord, one Spirit, one baptism, and thus becomes "one body."

4) *Community of the Spirit* – The community of Spirit is a new creation, the sign of God's new humanity. The church serves and suffers but also celebrates and hopes, because it already experiences a foretaste of new life and joy in the koinonia, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."[68]

As stated, the word koinonia denotes the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It is the fellowship of God's church sharing and caring for each other. The early church demonstrated koinonia whereby, creating an environment where caring, sharing and the unity of God is present in the community. James Evans conveys, "The basis for the church's claim to holiness is koinonia, or fellowship, to which it is called. This fellowship is not simply a human association. It is also fellowship with Christ. These two aspects of koinonia are inseparable. One cannot be in Christ and be alienated from one's brothers and sisters."[69] In large part, one of the primary charges of the church is koinonia, not only within the walls of today's church sanctuaries, but beyond the walls with community at large. The community outside of the walls of the church is the extended congregation, and the people of God are called to serve humankind at large. "The ultimate symbol of this sharing and participation is communion as expressed in the

[68]Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding, An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2004) 252 – 254.

[69]Jones and Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach,* 225.

Lord's Supper. In this sharing and participation the community identifies with Christ by symbolically sharing in his suffering and in the hope of the resurrection."[70]

"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). The sacred scriptures are the essence of God's love and continuous message to the body of Christ and to the world. The sacred word proclaims Christ, and the Holy Spirit convicts and empowers God's people to action. Kerygma is the Greek word used in the New Testament for preaching. Kerygma also means proclamation, herald, or announcement. Throughout the gospels, we read witness after witness, of Jesus preaching in the synagogues (Lk 4:17-21), on the Mount (Mt Chs. 5 - 7), and many other public squares. He preached the good news to the saved, the poor, the downtrodden, and to all that would hear. "As witness to the living Word of God, Christian proclamation speaks to particular people in a specific time and place. It addresses a particular situation here and now with a specific message. It calls men and women to concrete decision and concrete action."[71] Prophetic preaching calls, convicts, equips, transforms and empowers community to service—diakonia.

> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Mt 28:19-20).

"The church is mission, and where there is no mission there is no church."[72] Nehemiah and the Jewish remnant were on a mission to rebuild the physical walls surrounding the city, while God was on a mission to rebuild their spiritual lives. The

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[70]Ibid., 225.

[71]Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding,* 279.

[72]Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth: A Summary of Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1981), 6.

Great Commission calls the church of Christ to discipleship. The Christian church is charged, "to go, and make disciples, baptizing them, and teaching (didache) them to observe all things Jesus commanded. There is always a response to the call of God, to the call of kerygma. Scripture tells us, "His word shall not return to Him empty, but it shall accomplish that what which He purposes, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

"The Mission of the AME Church is to minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people."[73] As a community of faith born out of sociological differences rather than theological differences, the AME mission and theology is one of liberation and social justice. The prophetic and liberating gospel is preached through the lens of our experiences as a people, and calls us to respond to the social inequities and injustices plaguing our communities, the marginalized and disenfranchised. Our mission calls us to not only minister within the walls of the sanctuary, but also to move beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to minister to community—our extended congregation. African American churches have a long history of providing outreach ministries that provide service to the congregation and community at large.

These outreach ministries address such social ills as poverty, homelessness, hunger, affordable housing, and education to name a few. The vision of the AME Church states, "At every level of the Connection and in every local church, the AME Church shall engage in carrying out the spirit of the original Free African Society, out of which the AME Church evolved: that is, to seek out and save the lost, and to serve the needy. It

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[73] *The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN: AME Sunday School Union, 2008), 16.

is also the duty of the Church to continue to encourage all members to become involved in all aspects of church training."[74]

How Should The Church Be Governed?

In the Old Testament Book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah the cupbearer to the king, was compelled to leave the comforts of the king's palace, to return to his home country to lead his people in the rebuilding project. Upon receiving a negative report about the wellbeing of the Jewish remnant, Nehemiah was filled with compassion, to go, and lead his people up from the ashes. The diakonia, or service of the church is part of its spirit. Succeeding the kerygma of God's word, should naturally lead the people of God to a life of diakonia, of helping others, especially the disadvantaged, "the poor and destitute, the marginalized, and downtrodden, or in biblical terms, widows and orphans.[75]

Cone writes, "The others for whom the church exists are the poor and not the rich, the downtrodden and oppressed and not the proud and the mighty. Because the church is a community called into being by the Crucified God, it must be a crucified church, living under the cross."[76] Nehemiah led just such a community in diakonia, in outreach ministry, in restoration, in renewal, and in the rebuilding of the walls of human lives. Like the early Christians, Nehemiah also was called to a spirit of community, rather than a spirit of individualism and independence.

Determining the governance of the AME church is its mission and acts of faith in its disciplines. The nature and mission of the AME church, as outlined in The Book of

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[74]Ibid., 16.

[75]Jones and Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach,* 227.

[76]Cone, *Speaking the Truth,* 124.

Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, is to fully identify with the poor and the oppressed in their struggle for human dignity. Further, this participation in human development is not optional, nor is it an addendum to an already crowded agenda. It must be the very heart of the life and work of our church, including those in positions of power within the church. Deviation from these doctrines and guiding principles dramatically alter the AME church's covenant with God.

There are two (2) categories of ministry in the AME Church, Local and Itinerant. Local preachers (deacons and elders) serve a designated local parish. Itinerant preachers (deacons and elders) are travelling preachers, and are able to travel to different parishes as appointed for pastoral assignment, and associate ministry. The AME Church is an episcopal body, meaning its hierarchical structure is bishop led.

The ekklesia is a community of faith, interdependent upon its members, called to serve one another and community at large—the world. By faith, Nehemiah motivated the Jewish remnant to move from shame and despair to social action in rebuilding their community. They stood up to injustice, prejudice, discrimination, hatred, inequality, and opposition. They improved the community spirit by supporting one another, by demonstrating the love and goodness of God, and through service to the community at large. They gathered in the public square to hear God's plan of action, and responded by starting outreach ministries of self-help, self-esteem, self-development, self-determination, hope, education, and empowerment. They united in harmony, embraced the power of God, and began the rebuilding process of their lives, as well as, rebuilding the walls and gates of their community in fifty-two days. Howard Thurman expresses, "We are created for community. We are born into community (i.e., the family) and

depend upon it for survival. Community nurtures us. Community is a gift of God, and we honor this gift when we live in community with respect and care for its members and all of creation."[77]

What Is The Role Of The Sacraments In The Life Of The Church?

The invitation to Christian discipleship and sacraments are open invitations to everyone. No matter your stature or station in life, rich, poor, well to do, or disenfranchised, all are invited and welcome to partake. Jesus freely extends the invitation of salvation to all, and all who accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, become members of the body of Christ, the church of God. The two [2] Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, become a part of the believer's outward symbolic acts through which we celebrate God's salvation, declare our allegiance to Christ, and affirm our presence in His church.

> Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men and women's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord, in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.[78]

"The early church clearly practiced baptism (Acts 2:41; 8:36; 10:47-48) in continuity with what Jesus himself had ordained (Mt 28:19-20). The Lord's Supper likewise became an integral part of worship (1 Cor 11:17-34)."[79] Symbolic of His story, which is now our story, Baptism and the Lord's Supper form the practices of commitment within the community of faith. Both of these sacraments are ordained of

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[77]Howard Thurman, *Howard Thurman: Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 89.

[78]*The Book of Discipline,* 19.

[79]Grenz, *Created for Community,* 520.

Christ our Lord, and both establish appropriate symbols central to aspects of the gospel story. "Because it signifies our union with Christ, participation in his church, and our public covenant with God, baptism is a visual word of proclamation. This act declares the death and resurrection of Christ on behalf of sinners, and it anticipates his return in glory. As a gospel proclamation baptism is to be a channel for the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those present."[80] Baptism signals the believer's death to an old way of life and one's birth to the new life in Christ.

Jesus himself, before starting his earthly ministry, was obedient to the call of God and responded by being baptized by John in the river Jordan. Migliore writes, "In this act, Jesus enters into solidarity with lost humanity. He begins the life of costly love and service that eventually leads to his passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus' baptism thus signifies his solidarity with the sinners and outcasts of this world and his complete obedience to his Father's will."[81] Like Jesus, the Son of God, and our greatest example, believers are baptized as an outward sign of regeneration and solidarity to have compassion for one another, the disenfranchised, and community.

> For I received from the Lord what I also handed onto you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Cor 11:23-26).

The church as covenant people, remember, and renew its covenant with Christ in the partaking of the sacrament called the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. A deeply Trinitarian celebration, the Lord's Supper is a meal of thanksgiving to God for the gifts of

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[80]Ibid., 523.

[81]Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding,* 282.

creation and redemption. Through the breaking and eating of the bread that symbolizes the broken body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the drinking of the wine that symbolizes His precious blood, the Lord's Supper unites the church into one body as God's covenant people. One's covenant with Christ is renewed each time they partake in the Lord's Supper. A practice of the early church as well, the Lord's Supper gathers together the past, present, and future of God's creative and redemptive work.

The great invitation (or solicitation) to come to the Lord's Table is an invitation extended to all baptized believers in Christ, where all of God's people are equal. Rich or poor, employed, unemployed, Black, white, etc. There is no discrimination at the Lord's Table. Jesus died for humanity. This is an open invitation to all that will come.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily received the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul said.[82]

Communion is not a private but a spiritual experience, an awakening to the call, communal call, and communal vision. "The gospel is the announcement of the presence of God's reign which establishes community. The community of God is creating a reconciled people who are concerned about compassion, justice, righteousness, and above all, love. It is a community interested in fellowship."[83] Communion includes visiting the sick and shut-in, and seeing about the general welfare of the members in general.

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[82]*The Book of Discipline,* 19.

[83]Grenz, *Created for Community,* 508.

What Is The Ultimate Destiny Of The Church In Christian Eschatology?"

Broadly speaking, and as one of the key elements of ecclesiology, Christian eschatology is a major branch of study within Christian theology. Eschatology, from two Greek words meaning *last* (ἔσχατος, last) and *study* (λογία, lit. discourse), is the study of the end of things, whether the end of an individual life, the end of the age, or the end of the world. Christian eschatology is the study of the destiny of humankind as the Bible reveals it, which is the primary source for all Christian eschatology studies.

The major issues and events in Christian eschatology are death and the afterlife, Heaven and Hell, the Second Coming of Jesus, the Resurrection of the Dead, the Rapture, the Tribulation, Millennialism, the end of the world, the Last Judgment, and the New Heaven and New Earth of the world to come. Eschatological passages are found in many places in the Bible, both in the Old and the New Testaments. There are also many extra-biblical examples of eschatological prophecy, as well as church traditions.[84]

Relative to death and the afterlife, baptism and Holy Communion in the AME church declare the death and resurrection of Christ on behalf of sinners, and it anticipates his return in glory. "As a gospel proclamation, baptism is to be a channel for the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those present."[85]

"Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit" (Jn 3:5). Baptism is a sign of regeneration, or the new rebirth. Upon accepting Jesus as Lord, one must be baptized as an outward sign of their faith in Christ, and the intention to lead a new life in the Spirit of God.

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[84]Wikipedia, accessed August 23, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_eschatology

[85] Grenz, *Created for Community,* 523.

In closing—like Nehemiah, the Church should have a heart for the people inside and outside the walls of the Church. The church should not be complacent with the comforts inside the established structure of a building, but should be challenged to move beyond the walls to help the Community, especially those in need.

Ecclesiology speaks graciously and parallels the key elements of this project theme, *To move beyond the walls to serve the Community through Christian outreach ministries that inform, educate, and empower. Moving beyond the walls will build collaborative partnerships between Church and Community, and shine compassion; the compassion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Model Of Ministry Design Overview

The model of ministry designed and implemented for this project is an emergency preparedness fair. The fair, as opposed to a standalone training session, was designed to create a lively and festive environment around the topic of emergency preparedness. It was also designed with the intent of bringing in corporate vendors, small businesses, and agencies that service the community. Vendors comprised of governmental and nongovernmental agencies and sponsors were able to set-up informational booths and distribute samples of their merchandise and information. Instead of being held captive in a town-hall style meeting, participants were able to walk around and meet with other participants, church members, and other resource providers.

The model of ministry goals for this project are in harmony with and complement the African Methodist Episcopal Church's mission statement: "To minister to the social, spiritual, and physical development of all people."[1] Brookins Community AME Church is a fertile ground - where the attainment of the stated Project objectives has the highest probability of success. Brookins Community AME Church is open to a growing population of 28,876 residents, mostly African American and Hispanic, with an average of 3.46 people per household. Fifty-two percent of the population is female, and there is a

[1]African Methodist Episcopal Church, accessed March 15, 2012, http://www.ame-church.com/about-us/mission.php

large segment of the population that is comprised of single adults and single parents stemming from divorce, separation, never being married, and being widowed.[2] Unemployment and economic uncertainty continues to disparage communities of color without exception.

The philosophical worldview influencing the conception and implementation of this model of ministry speak loudly to actions surrounding advocacy, participation, and empowerment as a focal point and driving motivation. Collaboration is viewed as a critical element guiding the relationships with project participants. The need to proceed collaboratively cannot be overstated so as not to intimidate or further marginalize the participants who are the subject of inquiry.

Empowerment is a key consideration in the selection of this ministry model. Taking into consideration the ethnography and cultural history of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and aforementioned population, The Emergency Preparedness Fair Outreach Model provides participants with survival knowledge that is typically underrepresented in communities of color. The model is designed to educate and train each attendee, irrespective of age, ethnicity, or limitation, on how to partake of the information and resources provided; while acquiring the knowledge to help themselves and others plan for and respond to unplanned emergency events like fires, earthquakes, and floods.

The model of ministry problem statement suggests that Brookins AME Church is deficient in its outreach ministries. The solution, or, proposed treatment hypothesis follows that: If outreach ministries are made available, the congregation, and critically, the surrounding community will participate; taking advantage of and benefiting from the

[2]Table 1 – Population Demographics

information and resources provided.The research objective is to prove or disprove the proposed treatment hypothesis, while answering the following question: Will providing an emergency preparedness fair engage, enlighten, and empower the community while expanding the reach of the church?

The primary research method is qualitative research with an emphasis on inquiry and ethnography. The selected research instruments used to test and prove or disprove the proposed treatment hypothesis and evaluate the extent to which expectations have been reached are interviews, a focus group, and a questionnaire. The strategies employed with the use of these instruments will provide for the collection of data used in establishing benchmarks and performance indicators for implementation, measurement of the program's success, and an analysis of the ethnography component.

The triangulating strategies used rely on the creation of interviews within and outside of Brookins Community AME Church, the establishment of a focus group, and the purposefully designed questionnaire. A total of three interviews were conducted, two by telephone, and one face-to-face. The interviews were unstructured and open-ended. Internal to the church organization, one-on-one interviews were designed to explore and collect data on how selected congregants view outreach ministries; whether or not there is a need for outreach ministries; and whether or not outreach ministry would benefit the church and community, etc.

Outside of the immediate church, the one-on-one interview's emphasis is on the benefits of collaborative partnerships between church and community through outreach ministries and the challenges presented in implementation. The focus group discussions centered on outreach ministries and the benefits of the church extending beyond the walls

of the sanctuary to interact with community. The questionnaires were designed to elicit feedback, validating the point of views and opinions that were presented during the interviews and focus group meetings.

DESIGN ASSUMPTIONS

Three major assumptions were used in the design of this ministry model as follows:

1) *Build it and they will come* - if outreach ministries are available, the congregation of Brookins Community AME Church and surrounding community will participate, taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and the associations presented.

2) Upon successful implementation, there will be: marked participation by the congregation and community resulting in an increased awareness of Brookins' goals and objectives with regard to community outreach; an expanded sense of community; and an extension of networks designed to engage and educate individuals, groups, and organizations.

3) By extending its reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary, Brookins Community AME Church, in effect will spread the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to humankind, enriching the lives of the people it touches, while developing a better and stronger sense of community. This partnering of church and community strengthens and helps create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, extending beyond the walls of the church helps to establish and build relationships with the community – our extended congregation.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Interviews

The informational interviews were conducted individually, with each respondent answering the same set of questions. In total, three individuals were interviewed; two members from Brookins AME and a third person who was the former pastor of First

AME Church in Los Angeles—a mega-church, with twenty-nine years of rich history and expertise in outreach ministry. It was explained to each interviewee in advance that the information gathering was for a school project involving community outreach. Permissions were gathered to record and include the feedback from each person interviewed in this document. The questions posited in each interview centered on the respondents views, beliefs, opinions and/or experience in outreach ministry programs. In coding the responses from each interview, common themes and elements emerging from each interview conducted served to validate the assumptions in this model include: building relationships, establishing collaborative partnerships, and the churches' presence in community.

Focus Group

There were nineteen participants in the focus group. The meeting was productive and revealing. Participants were forthcoming and eager to share their ideas, opinions, and recommendations for each topic addressed. The focus group discussions were centered on the assumptions used in this model, facilitating the ease of coding. As in the one-on-one-interviews, common themes arose and were discussed by the group; this process facilitated selective coding of the major themes discussed. Of those that responded, 100% were in favor of Brookins AME doing more to extend beyond the walls through outreach ministries. Markedly, one person commented, "...after all, community is part of our church's name."

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used for this model consists of eight questions with a space for comments. Used as a research instrument, the questionnaire was selected for use with this model because of its flexibility and the option afforded of surveying the feelings of participants. I cooperatively designed the questionnaire with the context associates; they were distributed the day of project implementation. The design of the questionnaire provided for the collection of statistical outcomes that when analyzed, 1) prove the proposed treatment hypothesis stated earlier; or 2) provide outcomes that contradict the null hypothesis. The questionnaire also provides support in validating the assumptions used in this model.

The questionnaire consisted of a combination of open-ended and-close-ended questions. Out of all of the questions developed for the questionnaire, eight were selected, so as to simplify and ease the process of completion.

Benchmarks For Measurement

The benchmarks for measurement of the model's success are the degree to which the proposed hypothesis is true and the degree to which the major assumptions hold true based on data triangulation from the interviews, focus-group study, and questionnaires, thusly establishing that, if the conclusions from each of these three qualitative methods are the same, therein validity is established. Conversely, the null treatment hypothesis will show that providing such outreach ministries will have no value to the community or to the church, if the results do not support the assumptions used in this model.

Furthermore, triangulating data provides insight into the ethnography and/or culture of the church as an organization, the congregants, and members of the community. Pre test measures served to validate the hypothesis and influence the design of the questionnaire consisted of the interviews with two Brookins members; one interview of a non-Brookins member; feedback from context associates; and information obtained during focus-group meeting. The posttest, another method used to validate the hypothesis, represents the collection, coding, and analysis of data provided in the questionnaire, which was distributed on the date of implementation.

Data Capture And Analysis

A great wealth of information was collected using the instruments described. As a means to capture the information from the interviews, focus group, and questionnaires, a database using Excel was created. Within the database, the information was coded allowing for the categorization of information along the lines of the proposed hypothesis treatment and the assumptions for this model of ministry. Additionally, tape recordings and some handwritten notes were used to capture information from interviews, focus-group meetings, and meeting with the context associates. A considerable amount of time was expended organizing, reviewing, and becoming familiar with the raw data. Like themes and perspectives emerged, indicating Brookins Community AME Church needs to have more outreach ministries, more community presence, to be known in the community, and build collaborative partnerships.

Triangulating Data

The interviews, focus group, and questionnaire enabled triangulating data analysis, which for qualitative research, is the highest level of validity among the analytical tools. The results from each instrument used were examined separately and collectively, to prove the proposed treatment hypothesis. At each of the data collection points, it was disclosed that the data being collected was for a school project, and permission to proceed with the interviews and inquiries was obtained.

The triangulation method of data analysis facilitates the use of competing qualitative data analysis strategies that serve as checks and balances. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—support the accuracy of the data and are natural outcomes afforded by the triangulation method.

Credibility - Confirmation was obtained from both interviewees and the focus-group that the understanding of their expressed views, opinions, and experience as stated in this report were indeed correct. The context associates reviewed the results of the survey and acknowledged that the results satisfied the credibility requirement.

Transferability - Central to the research aspect of this model of ministry are the three assumptions used to support the proposed treatment hypothesis. The assumptions were presented in the overview of this chapter and are re-iterated in the following:

1) *Build it and they will come* - if outreach ministries are available, the congregation of Brookins Community AME Church and surrounding community will participate, taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and the associations presented.

2) Upon successful implementation, there will be: marked participation by the congregation and community resulting in an increased awareness of Brookins' goals and objectives with regard to community outreach; an expanded sense

of community; and an extension of networks designed to educate and enlighten individuals, groups, and organizations.

3) By extending its reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary, Brookins Community AME Church, in effect will spread the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to humankind, enriching the lives of the people it touches, while developing a better and stronger sense of community. This partnering of church and community strengthens and helps create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, extending beyond the walls of the church helps to establish and build relationships with the community – our extended congregation.

Replicated throughout the data collected from interviews, focus group, and questionnaires are responses to and opinions and beliefs about the above three assumptions, adding to the transferability of data collected from the three primary sources. The assumptions also appear in and validate the body of work leading up to and including this Model of Ministry, substantiating that this ministry model is transferrable and replicable.

Dependability - As a by-product of the qualitative research, certain behavioral characteristics were observed during interviews, focus-group meetings, and planning sessions. In and of itself, verbal language can sometimes be misleading. However, taking into account behavioral characteristics such as body language and psychic language can provide additional information that allows for the proactive identification of issues surrounding communication and collaboration, and serve as a gauge to measure the degree of difficulty moving forward and implementation based on displayed attitudes like agreement versus disagreement, resistance versus acceptance toward delegated authority and psychological undertones like agreement versus disagreement, collaboration versus instigation, and the level of excitement or disinterest. Fortunately, the behavioral characteristics of individuals and groups remained steadily positive throughout the entire

process. In pre and post implementation meetings confirmation of the assumptions and approach were noted.

Confirmability - Members of the church, context associates, project committee members, focus-group participants, and a professional associate skilled in the art of community outreach corroborated the approach, methodology, and expected outcomes for this model of ministry project. The confirmability process enabled the reading and critiquing of the results, analysis, and validity of this model by the context associates, project committee, and professional associate.

Highlights Of Research Results

The content analysis or narrative summarizing the results of research data is expectedly and markedly positive. Triangulating the results from interviews, focus-group meetings, and questionnaires, the following are representative of the emerging themes reflected in each of the three instruments and qualitatively prove the proposed treatment hypothesis.

Examples Of More Outreach Ministries:

- Partner with food distributors becoming a Food Bank
- Offer Social Media classes
- Host seminars on topics such as: Social Security Benefits and Resource Information; Health and Fitness; Affordable Care Act; Financial Literacy on Debt Elimination; Youth Programs

Examples Of More Community Presence

- Walk the neighborhood of the church quarterly or bi-annually to inform the community that the church is extending beyond the walls. Take brochures about the church and/or flyers of upcoming events
- Be visible in the community

Examples Of Being Known in the Community

- Offer outreach programs that attract, inform, and empower
- Become a Resource Center to the community through seminars, Town Hall Meetings, etc.

Examples Of Building Collaborative Partnerships

- Partner with City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department and Homeland Security to become a Resource Center in the event of an emergency
- Establish relationships with businesses and other Faith Based Organizations in the community
- Establish relationships with agencies, non-profits, and schools

In summary, of the results obtained from the questionnaire, 70% of participants attending the fair were members of the church and 30% of the participants were community members but not members of the church. Suggestions for spreading the word about the event, thereby increasing community awareness and engagement, are explored further in the next chapter.

There were 125 participants who attended the Emergency Preparedness event. During the event, eighty questionnaires were distributed under tight controls established by the project committee. Seventy-eight of the questionnaires were completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 98%. This is an excellent response rate for any type of survey, particularly when there is no monetary or tangible incentive for the respondents to complete the questionnaire. Highlighted below is an analysis of some key results indicated by the questionnaire results.

- 67% of the Fair participants were members of Brookins AME Church and 33% were from the community
- 97% of the respondents found the information, e.g., presentations, handouts, printed literature, and interactions with the vendors and agencies useful
- 96% were "very satisfied" with the event
- 95% said they would attend other Community events at Brookins
- 74% are likely to attend Church Service at Brookins AME as a result of attending this event
- 77% said the Church is doing a good job in helping the community
- 21% provided recommendations on how the event might be improved

Overall, the questionnaire analysis results support the proposed treatment hypothesis and can be used as additional measures in support of the model assumptions. The results further indicate that the Emergency Preparedness Fair was a productive use of time and resources, and informative, and that the goal of expanding the church's presence in the community was achieved and desired.

Summary

On a scale of one to ten, with ten being the highest, the event can be rated as a ten. Of those who participated, 97% found the information useful; 96% were satisfied with the event; and 95% said they would attend other Community events Brookins Community AME Church.

It is interesting to note overwhelming agreement that Brookins should have more of a presence in the community, Brookins needs to be more known in the community, Brookins should have more outreach ministries, and that Brookins needs collaborative partnerships and relationship building with the community in keeping with its outreach ministry goals and God's covenant.

The attendees appeared very interested in the subject matter. They were engaged in the presentations by keeping their eyes fixed on the presenter, sitting upright and attentive, actively visiting the vendor booths, asking questions, and gathering printed literature. It is important to note that all congregation participants were made aware that this ministry model is a school project, suggesting the reason why there was no opposition for the project from church members. Participants understood that the *Fair* was a blessing for the church as well as the community; resulting in a win-win pursuit. Equally appreciated are comments from the vendors who expressed appreciation for the church's hospitality; how nice the church members were to them; how well organized the Fair was; and that this Fair was the best in their experience. These accolades were great commendations especially since the majority of vendors, as a matter of routine, participate in emergency preparedness community events all the time.

In the biblical context, and in keeping with the hypothesis of this model of ministry, much of what was accomplished by the implementation of the Emergency Preparedness Fair Model of Ministry resembles the efforts of Nehemiah, but in this instance, without opposition. Nehemiah, as described in the Old Testament, led the people of Jerusalem in rebuilding the broken down walls of the city. In the text, Nehemiah 2:17-18, we learn that Nehemiah had a heart for his people and for his community. He put God first in all that he did. He was faithful, compassionate, and selfless. A bridge-builder between spirituality and community, Nehemiah was a civic leader, a community organizer, a community activist, a motivator, and a resourceful administrator highly favored by God. Thus, from the biblical perspective, Nehemiah becomes the perfect example of the leadership that is required in today's church to

engage, enlighten, and empower its congregants. Nehemiah is truly the right Old Testament role model for moving beyond the walls.

Nehemiah provided the community with leadership, a plan, and encouragement, and led the way in rebuilding a city in ruins. Despite opposition, the wall was rebuilt in fifty-two days, and this rebuilding project helped develop the community at large. The rebuilding efforts affected the community at large instilling pride, strength, and hope to its people.

The conclusion that is drawn here is that when people feel better about themselves and are equipped with information to improve their lives, they automatically perform better, their family become motivated to do more, and resultantly, the community at-large benefits and is improved.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The field experiences described in this chapter reflects the personal insights, practical experiences, and factual observations gained during the planning, development, and implementation stages of the ministry model for the Emergency Preparedness Fair. A significant number of tasks marked pre and post implementation were identified during the planning stage and are reflected in the project timeline. The timeline includes major tasks and activities like meeting with the church conference, meeting with context associates, contacting governmental and non-governmental agencies, conducting interviews and the focus group, and developing the posttest questionnaire.

Critical aspects of the program development include design of the ministry model, research and analysis of the goals and objectives for this model of ministry, the formulation and validation of a proposed hypothesis treatment, development of the pretest and post test to validate the hypothesis and supporting assumptions. The nature of this model of ministry is expansive as are the observations, facts, and data collected. Inasmuch, this chapter addresses the research data and its role in determining the success of the program and those key aspects of the implementation that speak to the scope of the project plan; elaborating on significant field observations, interactions, and findings. Feedback on what is perceived as participant experience during implementation is

discussed, in addition to post implementation tasks; key accomplishments, and lessons learned.

Beyond the Walls: The Church's Role to Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Community, is the theme prayerfully selected for this Doctor of Ministry Project and model of outreach ministry. The problem statement is that Brookins AME Church is deficient in its outreach ministries. The solution, or, proposed treatment hypothesis follows that: If outreach ministries are made available, the congregation, and critically, the surrounding community will participate; taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and resources provided. The underlying assumptions used in this model are as follows:

1) *Build it and they will come* - If outreach ministries are available, the congregation of Church and surrounding community will participate, taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and the associations presented.

2) Upon successful implementation, there will be: marked participation by the congregation and community resulting in an increased awareness of Church's goals and objectives with regard to community outreach; an expanded sense of community; and an extension of networks designed to engage, enlighten, and empower individuals, groups, and organizations.

3) By extending its reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary, the Church, in effect will spread the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to humankind, enriching the lives of the people it touches, while developing a better and stronger sense of community. This partnering of church and community strengthens and helps create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, extending beyond the walls of the church helps to establish and build relationships with the community – our extended congregation.

On Sunday, September 15, 2013, a meeting was held with the church conference immediately following the morning worship service. There were seventy-five parishioners in attendance. The purpose of this scheduled church conference was to inform the congregation of the author's doctoral studies program and status at United

Theological Seminary, and to ask the church for their support, prayers, and cooperation. An overview of the ministry model for the Emergency Preparedness Fair (the Project) was given at this time.

It was explained that the focus of the ministry model (project) is to establish a blueprint and example of how the church can extend beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to engage community through outreach ministries. The focus also touched upon how outreach ministries have been an integral part of the African Methodist Episcopal Church heritage, and how these ministries are a natural progression of actions allowing the church to extend its reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary to engage, enlighten, and empower community. It was also expressed how outreach ministries are a win-win for the church and the community. At the end of the conference, the pastor commended project efforts, and the parishioners gave a standing ovation as an expression of their full support, prayers, and cooperation. Once approval of the Ministry Model was given in August, project activities commenced. Noted as the project timeline, the following is a high-level lists of the activities pursued.

Project Timeline

September 2013

- Present Ministry Model to Church Conference and ask for their support.
- Meet with Context Associates.
- Contact the American Red Cross for their availability January 11th, 2014 for Disaster Preparedness Seminar.
- Develop open-ended questions for Focus Group, Interviews and Questionnaire.

- Schedule Focus Group
- Conduct Interview

October 2013

- Conduct Interviews
- Host Focus Group

November 2013

- Conduct Interview
- Notify congregation and community of upcoming Outreach Ministry (Disaster Preparedness Training).

December 2013

- Notify congregation and community of upcoming Outreach Ministry (Disaster Preparedness Training).

January 2014

- Implement Outreach Ministry
- Have participants complete questionnaire.
- Analyze data.
- Interpret data.

During the period of September 21, 2013 through January 4, 2014, monthly face-to-face meetings were held with the context associates. The context associates are chosen to assist in the planning and implementation of the ministry model within the local context. Associates are drawn from the people expected to benefit from the program. "Context associates work with the candidate to determine the design of the ministry model."[1] "They also evaluate the candidate's ability to lead their sessions and respond to

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[1]Doctor of Ministry Student Handbook, (Dayton, OH: United Theological Seminary, January 12, 2012), 34.

the group process and agreements."[2] The Doctor of Ministry program at United Theological Seminary mandates project participation by context associates. The purpose of this mandate is to provide people in context with the opportunity to assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project. Throughout the entire project, communication was maintained via email and telephone. The context associates were an invaluable asset, contributing as a resource in the planning, organizing, and evaluation of this ministry model. Beginning with the first planning meeting of nine context associates, and continuing through to project implementation, and evaluation, the context associates invested heavily of their time, excellent ideas and suggestions, willing hearts, finances, and cooperative spirits.

October 2013, nine committees were established to assist with project implementation. Some of the committees that were established and their respective roles are as follows.

- Logistics Committee - Ensure the church is open at designated time; that the appropriate number of tables and chairs are set-up in the Fellowship Hall; and that the microphones are set-up and operational in the sanctuary.
- Hospitality Committee - Greet event attendees; provide directions to restrooms and Fellowship Hall and serve as host and hostesses to the event attendees.
- Food Committee - Plan the lunch menu; prepare and make available box lunches for event attendees; and provide water.
- Publicity Committee - Create for distribution, bilingual flyers announcing the event; place ad in Newspaper; contact and invite City Councilmember, County Supervisor, and the Neighborhood Council.
- Giveaways Committee - Stuff kits using donated reusable bags with items donated by agencies; on the day of the event give stuffed reusable gift bags to every event attendee.

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[2]Ibid.

- Survey Committee - Assist in developing the questionnaire; review project assumptions to formulate questions supporting the expected outcomes of data collected.

The committees were formed four months prior to project implementation date, and each played an active role in project implementation. The Lord could not have put together a better project committee. They were a blessing and contributed to the success of this ministry model.

In an effort to engage parishioners, and allow them first-hand experience of what it means to move beyond the walls, announcements were run in the Sunday Bulletins, inviting anyone interested to attend committee planning meetings. This gave congregants an opportunity to be a part of the ministry model planning and participate in community outreach. This project represents a formalize approach to outreach ministry. The church can gain hands-on experience, archive, catalogue, and use this project model as an example on how to simplify and streamline the development and administration of future outreach ministry programs, and gain insight from the successes and lessons learned.

Qualitative Research - Overview

The selected research method used to test the proposed treatment hypothesis and evaluate the extent to which expectations have been reached was the qualitative method that includes ethnographic strategies of inquiry. The Qualitative Research Method is the best fit for the culture of context, and offers a wide range of research instruments well suited for this group.

The ethnography of context is African American congregants. In the modern day example of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, it is steeped deeply in the fabric of American history and culture. Also known as the AME Church, the African Methodist

Episcopal Church was founded by Richard Allen, in 1787, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Richard Allen was an ex-slave, a preacher, and arguably a community activist and organizer. Allen was one of the founders of the Free African Society (FAS), a mutual-aid society dedicated to social justice and to elevating "...the moral, financial, and educational status of blacks."[3] Before the AME church, the FAS led the cry against the societal ills of racism, including and in particular, discrimination against blacks in religious worship.

Historically, the Black Church, specifically the AME Church, has reached beyond the walls of the church building to provide various outreach ministries and programs to assist with meeting the needs of community. Such outreach ministries have included Education, Health, Finances, Housing and Seminars, to name a few. These outreach ministries have served as a vehicle for the church to bind together as one with community, showing the church cares not only for those within the walls of the sanctuary, but for the extended congregation outside the walls of the sanctuary as well. Brookins AME has also had a history of outreach ministry. However, in recent times, there has been a lack of continuity of these programs. One of the contributing factors is the hierarchical governance and practice of reassigning church pastors every four year - taking away the emphasis and sometimes motivation to continue on established programs. Nonetheless, outreach ministry opportunities, when presented, must be seized upon and executed in keeping with God's covenant.

The prophetic and liberating gospel is preached through the lens of our experiences as a people, and calls us to respond to the social inequities and injustices

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[3]History of the AME Church, accessed February 21, 2014,http://christianity.about.com/od/AME/a/AME-Church-History.htm.

plaguing our communities, the marginalized and disenfranchised. New opportunities abound for AME ministers to use their leadership, organizing, development, people, and teaching skills among others, toward the furtherance of God's ministry. Needless to say there are no hard choices in selecting new ministries, programs, and services, but rather, the challenge is making sure that the message is carefully crafted and communicated to insure that it reaches the intended audience and/or groups of participants.

Qualitative research was selected for several different reasons. It affords the ability to narrate and record the history of this endeavor and the beliefs and input from congregants in the AME church and non-congregants. In doing so, the available research instruments, e.g., interviews, focus-groups, and observations, allow congregants increased involvement and openness in the sharing of opinions, thoughts, and ideas. The Qualitative Method also affords the flexibility and fluidity needed for collaboration with Context Associates. Increased involvement, engagement, and openness in the sharing of opinions, thoughts, and ideas were outcomes using the qualitative approach.

The objective of this Ministry Model study is for Brookins Community AME Church to extend beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to engage, enlighten, and empower community; to build collaborative partnerships with the community; and to established relationships with various agencies and businesses, the results of which will accrue to the benefit of the congregation, and community at-large.

Interviews, a focus group, and a questionnaire were the research instruments used in performing the qualitative research. Critical to the planning stage was the research design, identifying the assumptions, objectives, and desired outcomes for each of the three research instruments, pre and post implementation. Data triangulating strategies

were used as methods to validate and confirm the results from each of the research instruments by looking for similarities or differences between the expected results among all three instruments. In the case of this Model, the outcomes from each of the three separate instruments could be used independently or interdependently to prove the proposed treatment hypothesis.

The triangulating data strategies methodology is a formal method used to prove credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirm-ability of the results data and in validating the proposed treatment hypothesis and behavioral assumptions. Fortunately, the design process for this Ministry Model was extremely effective because common themes emerging from the results of each of the three research instruments results; speak to the reliability of the research data. Working with the focus group, context associates, and the professional associate interviewed for this project; created the opportunity to secure ideas, thoughts, suggestions, and recommendations that speak to opportunities and challenges in proving the proposed hypothesis in addition to providing the ideas to formulate questions for use in the questionnaire.

The established focus group, interviews, and the questionnaire speak to the confirm-ability and dependability of the research data. The validity of the triangulating data was evaluated and corroborated by the context associates and project committee. We can always go back to the sources whether by going to the source, using the recorded sessions, in-person contact, or referring to archived data results from each of these three sources. The research data from the research instruments proved highly transferrable in support of the project hypothesis and underlying assumptions. Common themes like more community presence, building collaborative partnerships, and being known in the

community are examples of outcomes that emerged during pre and post test. Pre and posttest were additional measures used to validate the research results. The focus group, meetings with context associates, and interviews were used to develop pretest measures. Posttest results were reviewed with context associates and members of the project committee. The research conducted bears heavily on the field experience relative to the social commentary and relationships established.

Focus Group

The focus group was held on Saturday, October 19, 2013. Participants included three men and sixteen women. In advanced preparation for this meeting, advice and tips presented in, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook,* were noted and used to guide the discussions. The book suggests, "Informed consent and permission of all parties involved should be obtained by the primary researcher."[4] The purpose of gathering the information under discussion and how this information would be subsequently utilized was explained to each participant. The group was informed that the meeting would be recorded, so that active listening could occur while not having to worry about the constraints of note taking. The recording device used was an IPad, MicPro App.

An overview of outreach ministries and their role in the church was presented, along with the following questions: What are your beliefs about outreach ministries? What is your opinion on Brookins Community AME Church having more of a presence in the community, driven by outreach ministries? What are your views on building collaborative partnerships? What are your views on the church as leader in community?

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[4]Nancy Ammerman, Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations A New Handbook* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1998).

The focus group was very forthcoming in their participation, and eager to share their thoughts on each question. The results of the responses indicated that 100% were in favor of Brookins doing more to extend beyond the walls through outreach ministries. One person commented, "After all, community is part of our churches name."

One hundred percent of the attendees agreed outreach ministries are very much needed at Brookins, and the importance of the church having presence in the community. The group freely shared examples of previous outreach ministries offered at Brookins' under previous pastoral administrations over the years. Examples of previous outreach ministries were: Clothes Closet, Food Bank, Daycare, Free Legal Clinic, food and toiletry giveaways to the homeless on Skid Row. As the group reminisced about these former outreach ministries, the researcher observed the group transform with energy, pride, and enthusiasm, as they recalled the churches involvement in community, the churches role in community, the benefits these ministries brought to church and community, and their commitment to helping others.

The focus group's comments on the church forming collaborative partnerships with community, businesses, and agencies already doing the work were 100% positive. The consensus was, when people know one another, it helps to build strong relationships. People are more likely to work with people they know, people they are acquainted with, rather than strangers. Initially, we are strangers until someone reaches out to build a relationship. It is the churches role to lead, to reach-out, and take the initial steps to build community relationships. Moving beyond the walls of the sanctuary to establish collaborative partnerships, and build community relations, strengthens not only the church, but the community at large.

The focus group also shared, that in former years, Brookins Community AME Church had a relationship with a Jewish Temple in Los Angeles. During Thanksgiving season, the Jewish Temple provided large quantities of turkeys and nonperishable items to Brookins' for distribution to needy families. This was a good collaborative partnership between two faith based organizations that benefitted the community at large, and let community know the cares for community. The focus group agreed collaborative partnerships also help the church to get their name out into the community, and build a good reputation of helping community.

The focus group expressed that outreach ministries will help the church become visible in the community. The community needs to know Brookins, and Brookins needs to know its community. This should be one of the churches goals. When the church offers substantive outreach ministries, community will come. This gives the church visibility in the community, and a good reputation of helping and caring for others. The church will be seen by community as a friend, and as a good neighbor. In a household of faith living up to its mandate of helping others, people naturally gravitate to a church that is friendly, and that reaches out to help others. Community presence is very important. The church cannot reside in community and not reach out to community.

The Church as Leader in the Community—The focus group agreed one hundred percent the churches' role in community is to lead. Community should look to the church for direction, not the reverse. Extending beyond the walls through outreach ministries, such as, town hall meetings, voter education and registration, debt elimination, health and wellness seminars, propels the church into the community as a leader, as a resource center—a center which engages, enlightens, and empowers the community.

Interviews

One-on-one internal interviews were designed to collect data on how selected congregants view outreach ministries; whether or not there is a need for outreach ministries; and whether or not outreach ministries would benefit the church and community. The external interview was to collect data on the benefits of collaborative partnerships between church and community through outreach ministries.

Three interviews were conducted for this Model of Ministry. Two of the respondents were members of Brookins Community AME Church, and a third respondent was outside of the church; a former pastor of twenty-nine years at First AME Church in Los Angeles, a mega-church. The interviews were conducted individually, however, the same questions were asked of each respondent.

Before starting the interview, each person was informed that information and data were being collecting data for a community outreach project for school. Express permission to conduct and record the interview was obtained from each of the individuals interviewed. The questions posited in each interview centered on the respondents views, beliefs, opinions and/or experience in outreach ministry programs. The responses by the church members were more in line with the opinions and comments made by the focus group.

The AME pastor shared a new and interesting perspective. The following outline is not the entire interview but rather serves to inform the ideology of church and community outreach.

Jesus is constantly asked, "Why have you come?"

Jesus responds with Three E's to: Engage, Enlighten, Empower.

When you get those three they are summarized to Elevate:

To lift the fallen

To give sight to the blind

To give bread to the hungry

To give Hope to the Hopeless; Hope to the Homeless.

To give rest to the weary. To Elevate.

The pastor summarizes community outreach as the mission of the church. The Word made flesh. In the beginning was the word. A true Word church is not only within the walls, but beyond the walls. You do not have religion until it extends beyond you—extends beyond the walls.

The Five Benefits of Outreach Ministry

1) Utilization – Working those who are trained in the word; putting them to work.

2) Fertilization – Seed planting and the yearning soil. People are hungry for the living word. The world is hungry for the living word, and outreach ministry fertilizes that hungry soil. Feed it, water it, and nurture it.

3) Demonstration – Displaying God's "intentionality"[5] to those within the church are God's commercial. Display God's intentionality that is God's purpose for creation.

4) Illumination – Translating darkness into light. The true light that enlightens everyone. But to those who chose light, He chose power; He gave dynamite to turn the world upside down.

5) Salvation - Implementation of God's plan for all. Salvation comes from the word salvus, meaning drawn out, drawn out of darkness, drawn out of hunger, drawn out of pain.

Those who benefit from the outreach of those who come from beyond the walls—those who benefit themselves become commercials. They move from church to commercials of the founder of the church, Jesus Christ. The helpless that are helpful,

[5]The pastor used this word as written, it is not incorrectly spelled.

become helpers. A rising tide lifts all vessels and our great challenge is leadership. Leadership is a battleship, constantly caught up in storms. But one must insist on not being a Katrina, destroying, but a rising tide lifting. This external interview yielded a wealth of wisdom and knowledge in support of the project focus—the churches' role to extend beyond the walls of the sanctuary to engage, enlighten, and empower community through outreach ministry. It is the mission of the church.

Questionnaire

The results of the data collected overwhelmingly supports outreach ministries as a pivotal means of connecting church and community. Common themes addressing the possibilities for outreach ministries include:

- Brookins needs to have more of a presence in the community
- Brookins needs to be known in the community
- Outreach ministries are important to the ministry of the church
- Brookins needs the community
- Establish collaborative partnerships and build relationships
- Brookins benefitting by carrying out the commandments of Christ, will increase membership and spiritual growth in the congregation
- Leadership
- Other comments AME System moving pastors. The next pastor may or may not embrace outreach ministries
- Church is community leader and anchor
- Emergency Prepared

The questionnaire was developed and distributed the day of project implementation by the context associates. The United Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry project

mandates that there be participation of the context associates. The purpose of this mandate is to allow persons n the local church, in this case Brookins Community AME, the opportunity to assist the leader in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of this project.

Posttest

On the day of project implementation there were a total of 125 persons in attendance. During the event, eighty questionnaires were distributed; seventy-eight of the questionnaires were completed and returned. An excellent response rate of 98% was achieved and can be largely attributed to the controls exercised by the survey committee.

As previously stated, common themes emerging from the posttest questionnaire were: Having more of a presence in the community; to be known in the community; outreach ministries; Brookins needs the community; and collaborative partnerships/building relationships. The posttest questionnaire and data analysis are as follows:

1. Are you a member of Brookins Community A.M.E. Church?

Research Indicates: Yes 67% No 33%

Results Indicate:

- A greater number of congregants versus community were in attendance
- Community representation was good at 33%

2. How did you learn about this event?

Research Indicates: Other Source 65% Friend 26%

Newspaper 8% No Response 1%

Results Indicate:

- 65% of the respondents learned about the outreach event via "Other Sources" which are identified as: the Sunday Bulletin, Sunday Announcements, Project Committee, Church Members, the American Red Cross, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and flyers.

- Opportunity further exists to identify what percentages of "Other Source" categories were most effective to exploit those channels.

- "Friend" and "Other Source" were most effective in signaling the event. The response from the newspaper was unimpressive

3. Was the information useful? On a scale of 1 to 3

3 being *Very Satisfied*, 2 being *Somewhat Satisfied*, 1 being *Least Satisfied*

Research Indicates: Yes 97% No 3%

Results Indicate:

- 97% of the respondents found the information, e.g., formal presentation, handouts, printed literature, interactions with the vendors, useful.

- Suggests multi-media is highly effective.

- This type of program is very useful.

4. Were you satisfied with this event? On a scale of 1 to 3

3 being *Very Satisfied*, 2 being *Somewhat Satisfied*, 1 being *Least Satisfied*

Research Indicates:

Very Satisfied 96% Somewhat Satisfied 4%

Results Indicate:

- 96% of respondents were "Very Satisfied" with this event

- The Model was effective in achieving its objective

5. Would you attend other Community events here at Brookins?

Research Indicates: Yes 95% No 3% No Response 3%

Results Indicate:

- The majority of participants, 95% would attend other Community events at Brookins.
- Further suggests the effectiveness of the Model and speaks well to other possible events.

6. How likely are you to attend Church Service here as a result of attending this event?

Research Indicates: Most Likely 74% Likely 18%

No Response 5% Less Likely 3%

Results Indicate:

- 74% of respondents would" Most Likely" attend Church Service at Brookins.
- Opportunity exists for the Church to extend the invitation and connect with attendees as future church members for 92% of participants

7. Is the Church doing a good job in helping the community?

Research Indicates: Yes 77% No Response 6% Comment 17%

Results Indicate:

- 77% felt the church is doing a good job; this number should increase as more events are held in the community
- 17% of the respondents provided comments that include:
  - Give several; need more
  - Your passion is a delight that attracts the community - thank you.
  - Doing a fine job.
  - Not at this time.
  - That more be done.
  - Very well planned.
  - Put vendors/exhibitors in the same room as the presentations.
  - Possibly advertise using social media.
  - "It was beautiful." If it's not broke don't fix it!

- Outreach.
- Have more vendors able to present valuable information.
- The event was well planned out.
- This was very good.
- Very well done.
- Excellent event. Well prepared.
- Not off hand.
- Not at this time.
- Not at this time.
- Outreach.
- Keep doing what you are.
- It was great

8. Do you have any recommendations as to how we could improve this event?

Research Indicates: Yes 21% No 69% No Response 10%

Results Indicate:

- Few participants had any views or perhaps were reluctant to share their opinions. However, of the 21% that responded, most expressed appreciation and a desire to continue with programs of this nature.

Below are representative comments:

- Establish relationships with other Faith Based groups in the community.
- Establish relationships with businesses & agencies in the community.
- Reestablish relationship with Jewish Temple that provided turkeys during Thanksgiving &non perishable items.
- Event was good and we should continue to offer programs like this for the community.
- Do more of them.
- Keep sharing this information.
- Continue to keep the community informed.
- Make it a every other year event.

- Great event, well organized! More publicity to notify community. The total needs of the individual. Thanks!
- Maybe a Hispanic interpreter for the neighbors.
- Advertise on radio to reach more people.
- Bigger outreach.
- Well done, decorated.
- Just continue doing what they are doing.
- More events.
- Explore other ways to advertise, get the word out.

In summary of the data collection methods, and data analysis, the results support the proposed treatment hypothesis: If outreach ministries are made available, the congregation, and critically, the surrounding community will participate; taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and resources provided.

In total, the results indicate that the Emergency Preparedness fair was a productive use of time and resources, informative, and that the goal of expanding the church's presence in the community was achieved. The survey forms indicated a need for this particular outreach ministry and that it was a valuable resource to the church and community. Partnering with agencies that are already doing the work, truly helped to make the day of implementation spectacular. Relationships with other businesses were fostered and valuable learning tools marked the infancy of the symbiotic relationship exhibited between church and community.

Implementation

The Community Emergency Preparedness Fair was held at Brookins Community A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles, CA, on Saturday, January 11, 2014. The event schedule was 11:00 A.M. - 2:30 P.M. The event serviced 125 participants from the church and

community. The Fair began with a General Assembly in the sanctuary of the church, and included greetings from the report author and special guest Councilmember Bernard C. Parks. Brookins Community AME Church is part of Councilmember Parks' District, the Eighth Council District of the City of Los Angeles. After greetings, guest speakers from the City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department, Southern California Gas Company, and the American Red Cross made their presentations on emergency preparedness. PowerPoint presentations were used to make the discussion more interesting; each speaker presented approximately thirty minutes.

The presentations evoked questions from the audience, and the discussion generated healthy interaction between the audience, and presenters. This healthy exchange caught the attention of the author as it was great to observe church and community engaged, active, and involved in acquiring important information to help them be prepared. This interaction also caught the author's attention, because it reminded her of the project hypothesis, if outreach ministries are available, then congregation and community will participate, take advantage of information presented, and benefit.

Concurrent with the General Assembly meeting and in a different room, was a special emergency preparedness presentation for elementary school aged children. This presentation was conducted by the American Red Cross who provided the children with free emergency preparedness backpacks. There were approximately fifteen children in attendance. Following the General Assembly, the adults and children were invited to the Fellowship Hall for lunch, and to interact with representatives from various agencies and small businesses. The Food Committee had prepared boxed lunches in advance, and the box lunches were free for everyone.

The agencies and businesses staffed and set-up their respective booths with literature on emergency preparedness and free giveaways. The following agencies participated in this Fair:

- City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department
- American Red Cross, the Los Angeles Unified School District
- Los Angeles Unified School District Police
- Department of Water and Power
- Southern California Gas Company
- City of Los Angeles Fire Department
- County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health
- California State Department of Insurance
- US Bank
- SOS Survival Products

It was great to see the attendees moving from booth to booth, asking questions, vendors responding to the questions and providing helpful information. This Community Emergency Preparedness Fair was informative and productive. Attendees were enlightened and better prepared to help themselves and families in the event of a disaster. This was an expected outcome of the data analysis. In addition to the aforementioned vendors, some of the local businesses in the immediate area of the church were invited to partner with Brookins in this community event by donating gift cards, or any giveaways they may have. The following businesses donated gift card(s):

- Walgreens
- Target

- Food 4 Less
- Home Depot.

The gift cards were raffled off during the general assembly, which really boosted the attention and enthusiasm of our guests. Subway donated a sandwich platter. The City of Los Angeles donated artistic reusable bags, and other giveaway items. Each attendee received a reusable bag, an assortment of free giveaways, and an Emergency Preparedness Guide provided by the Los Angeles County Emergency Management Department.

Participant Experience

It was observed that Fair attendees were very interested and engaged in the subject matter. They asked questions, visited vendor booths, and gathered printed literature. The attendees and vendors alike were active and continuously involved in the three and a half hour Fair. To knowledge, the topic of emergency preparedness is rarely promoted in the faith-based community. Yet, without this important information and preparation, a major disaster could prove life threatening. The attendees of the Fair were eager to get the information, and said the information was very helpful and enlightening. One attendee commented, "After attending the Fair, they realize they have a lot of work to do to get prepared." Others commented how much they enjoyed the Fair; that it was well organized and a great event.

The attendees were very interested in the subject matter. They were engaged in the presentations, in visiting the vendor booths, asking questions, and gathering printed literature. It was wonderful to hear praise worthy comments from the vendors, particularly how appreciative they were of the hospitality of the church. They expressed

how nice the church members were to them, how well organized the Fair was, and that this Fair was the best one in their experience. This was a great commendation, since the majority of vendors frequently participate in emergency preparedness community events as a matter of routine. The atmosphere of the Fair was festive, social, and very much informative. The attendees very much appreciated this outreach ministry being available.

Over the course of four months, the researcher observed what became known as the Project Committee. As the committee became partners in the project, they also took on ownership. They became stakeholders, and their pride, and enthusiasm began to shine through. The researcher observed the committee's attitudes flourish. The committee members seemed to have a purpose, a fulfillment in working to help God's people—community. The pride and purpose of the committee reminded the researcher of her foundational scriptures, Nehemiah leading and motivating the Israelites to repair the walls of Jerusalem; and in the Beatitudes where Jesus teaches the disciples they "are the salt of the earth, and light of the world." On the day of implementation there were a total of thirty-one committee members. The monthly committee planning meetings averaged an attendance of twenty-one.

Agencies and businesses were contacted to invite them to partner with Brookins AME in this community endeavor. By extending beyond the walls of the sanctuary to build new relationships and establish collaborative partnerships was a breath of fresh air. This effort helped to provide exposure for the church, meet other community stakeholders, make new friends, and improve community relations. It also said, we all have a common goal, which is to improve our community (community development)—the lives of people—people working together to better their community. The agencies

represented were appreciative of this community event because it helped them spread this important information to a wider audience. Nehemiah led the Israelites in the rebuilding project. He first presented them with a well thought out plan, which they embraced and implemented.

Post Implementation Actions

The intent of the ministry model is to be replicable. Following project implementation, the researcher was contacted by one of the fellow AME Churches, requesting consultation on how to organize an emergency preparedness fair. This was encouraging and another affirmation of success for the ministry model. In a continued effort to promote community outreach, a First Aid/CPR training class was coordinated and arranged in March. The training was conducted by the American Red Cross at Brookins Community AME Church. Upon completion of the six-hour training class, the attendees received a two-year certification. A total of nineteen people attended the training class. Fourteen attendees were members of Brookins and five were non-members invited by members of the church.

Following the Community Emergency Preparedness Fair, letters, and emails of gratitude were sent to the aforementioned agencies and businesses, thanking them for their representation, participation, donations, and support of this community event.

High Level Project Tasks

Planning - The need for proper planning was critical to the success of the project. The planning process began in September 2013. Identifying tasks and resources, meeting

with Context Associates, establishing committees, and contacting various agencies, was all critical to establishing an implementation date of January 11, 2014.

Leadership - Owning the process and assuming a leadership role throughout the planning and implementation stages was paramount controlling, coordinating, and managing the direction of the activities and tasks completed. Whether it was meeting with the committee to review the overview of the day; to answer questions the agencies/vendors had; speaking to the audience to welcome them & let them know the importance of the subject matter (emergency preparedness), but to also inform them this is a school project.

Delegation - A skilled Project Leader does not perform all the required tasks his/her self, but rather, delegates. Inasmuch, it was necessary to delegate various functions to others that assisted in the completion of the project tasks. Getting others involved and drawing others into the process was an important success factor.

Teamwork - a project of this type takes Teamwork; whether it is brainstorming, or listening to the suggestions of others, etc. This project required a lot of coordination; it was teamwork, throughout and on the day of implementation that made this project so successful. From the committee members working on their assignments, or the agencies/vendors participating, it was teamwork.

Communication - A continuous and expansive network of communication, verbal and written, is necessary to ensure proper understanding and agreement with the plan, the church, agencies, community, and committee members.

Key Accomplishments

- Conducted monthly planning meetings with the Project Committee; October 2013 through January 2014.

- Held meetings with Context Associates; September 2013 through March 2014.

- Walking the neighborhood to meet and inform the community about the Fair; was a great experience. By getting out and walking the neighborhood to distribute flyers, helped to put a face to Brookins Community AME Church, and personalized the invitation to those we came in contact with. A total of twelve members of Brookins participated. We went out in teams of two distributing the flyers. The men of the church escorted the women.

- The ministry model provided visibility and leadership in the community, established collaborative partnerships, exemplified an image of church as center of community, a church willing to move beyond the walls of the sanctuary to help humankind; a church that is not only concerned with internal but one that is also concerned with the external.

- The event shone as the beacon light, a light shining before men and women, that they may see the Lord's work, and glorify the father in heaven. It helped by *salting* the community. We are Salt of the earth, light of the world. And we demonstrated this by moving beyond the walls, to walk the community, to distribute flyers, inviting the Senior Citizen Center to attend, Neighborhood Councils. It was a win/win for all involved.

- Hosted the focus group October 19, 2013 and subsequent meetings.

- Held Church Conference.

- Conducted three interviews. Two interviews were of members of Brookins Community AME Church, and one interview was outside of Brookins, a former pastor.

- Walked with the committee through the church neighborhood, a week end before the event to distribute bilingual flyers announcing the Community Emergency Preparedness Fair.

- Communication - One of the context associates drafted a template to be personalized to each business, inviting them to partner with Brookins in this community event; Bilingual flyers were made and distributed to church and community announcing the Community Emergency Preparedness Fair; Ads

were ran in the Los Angeles Wave Newspaper, Los Angeles Sentinel Newspaper, and Eighth Councilman District newsletter.

- A banner announcing the Community Emergency Preparedness Fair, and Friends and Family Day was donated, and hung strategically in front of the church. This was an advertisement tool, as well as, a way of the church extending beyond the walls to reach out to community.

- Placed phone calls to governmental and non-governmental agencies inviting them to participate in Community Emergency Preparedness Fair.

- Expanded upon the relationship of businesses and agencies by representing the church and having them come to the church home to meet congregants and other members and businesses in the community.

- Managed news circulation including community newspapers, church bulletins, and flyers.

- Created mailing list and developed letter text for use with external contacts.

- Maintained formal documentation to track all activities related to this project, e.g., project plan, Timeline, database - Excel spreadsheets, etc.

- Wrote thank you letters to local businesses thanking them for their participation through donations.

- New relationships were established with the governmental agencies and small businesses that participated in the Emergency Preparedness Fair, as well as, people from the community.

- Taking the lead responsibility for the project, it was necessary to coordinate the efforts of thirty-one committee members, 16 agencies and businesses, the congregation of Brookins, advertisement (newspaper, flyers), photographer, and event attendees.

- The leadership, organization, administration, communication, business, theological, and project management skills and tools that were used helped create visibility for Brookins AME as a community partner viewed as a caring, giving church.

- Just like Nehemiah asking the king for resources, the project committees were tasks with the function of asking participating vendors for donations of goods and services.

- Met no opposition from church members, maybe because a school-project. They understood was a blessing for the church as well as the community, a win/win situation.

Lessons Learned

Collaborative partnerships are very important. Reaching out to others who embrace common goals truly support the theme of community. Partnering with the governmental agencies and small businesses are evidence of this. Also, partnering with context associates, and the project committee are examples of collaborative partnerships.

When churches engage activities that have positive effects and benefits for the community, the church generates a sense of pride, and an infectious-can-do-spirit throughout the community. In turn, this propels individuals and groups to want to achieve, and get involved in making the community at large a better place. The project data collected to-date, is encouraging and supports the claim that community outreach is needed whether on a large or small scale.

Moving beyond the walls gives congregants a sense of doing, a sense of helping, feeding, clothing, helping neighbor, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. As in the beginning days of the AMEC with the Free African Society, we are still our brothers keeper, the churches duty is to care for one another, care for neighbor, care for all.

Proper planning is a must in order to achieve the desired outcome. The Community Emergency Preparedness Fair was a production. It was implemented well because of a good plan, delegation, communication, teamwork, and dedication. On the day of implementation, the committee met with the author one hour before the event for briefing and prayer. The committee understood their assignments, and the plan was implemented well.

The research indicates 65% of the respondents learned about the outreach event via Other Sources. Other Sources listed were: the Sunday Bulletin, Sunday Announcements, Project Committee, church members, the American Red Cross, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and flyers. The results indicate Other sources were the most effective format to market this event.

More needs to be done to welcome Hispanic participants such as providing interpreters and using Hispanic radio stations and newspapers to advertise the event. The data from this ministry model indicates that Brookins Community AME Church has increased its visibility and awareness as a religious leader in the community serving those in need. Opportunities presents with expanded awareness to enlarge the congregation by extending an invitation to event participants.

Summary

The strategies employed provide for sufficient data that identify synergies between existing programs, methods for optimizing internal and external resources use, and establish a baseline operating model for future programs and ministries development, implementation, and/or enhancement.

The data analysis of this Ministry Model supports the hypothesis of Brookins Community A.M.E Church necessitating extending beyond the walls of the sanctuary to engage, enlighten, and empower community. The data indicates community outreach affords church and community many positive benefits. It establishes the church as a leader in community; as a good neighbor; as a beacon light shining brightly. The church extending beyond its walls provides hope and empowerment to the community-at-large, which strengthens church and community, advancing community development.

People first want to know that you care, before they care what you know. By empowering community through outreach ministries, and establishing collaborative partnerships, the light and love of Jesus shines brightly.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Called out of the world by the preaching of the gospel and their shared commitment as disciples of the Lord; early Christians established church in households. "They congregated in private homes. Women, men, and families invited the followers of Jesus into their homes to break-bread, share a cup of wine, and enter into a fellowship and communion with one another and with God."[1] There were no buildings, organizations, or denominations deemed the church. The Christian community comprised the spirit of the people—God's covenant people, called the church. "As the early church father Hippolytus declared, "It is not a place that is called church, not a house made of stones and earth…, it is the holy assembly of those who live in righteousness. Expressed theologically, the church is a people in covenant."[2] Unlike the early church, today Christians build and congregate in physical structures and buildings, on specified days or dates. The logistics of preaching, teaching, and caring for the less fortunate, in some cases, seems to present challenges for today's church in keeping its covenant and mission with God.

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[1]Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005) 207.

[2]Stanley J. Grenz, *Created for Community: Connecting Christian Belief with Christian Living.* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 464.

Like the message of Nehemiah, the proclamation of the gospel message calls God's people to respond with service. To put God's word into action by loving one another, and helping humankind. Just like the Jews, the churches role is not only to minister within the walls of the sanctuary, but to minister outside of the walls as well. Outreach ministries are very much a tradition of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, having begun with the Free African Society.

Beyond the Walls: The Churches' Role to Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Community—is the major theme and premise for the body of work completed on this journey here-to-date. The narrative lends itself to the peak of coursework completed, including, Biblical study and instruction; spiritual and academic debate and interpretation of verses within the beatitudes; biblical research; outreach ministry project planning; and most significantly, a contemporary outreach ministry Emergency Preparedness Project—conceived and implemented—as one of the lifelong goals to serve those in need as prescribed in God's covenant and mission. This most important characteristic and outcome of the Emergency Preparedness Project is that it achieved the objective of extending beyond the walls of the church, while providing the community with information, resources, and potentially a spiritual connection, in addition to empowering those in need. Our mission calls us to not only minister within the walls of the sanctuary, but also to also move beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to minister community—our extended congregation.

The research into the biblical history and outreach history of the AME people was intense, but amazing in the fact that while so much time has passed since our forbearers, so many challenges of faith remain the same today. Easily identified as an overarching

theme of the Bible and in the Ecclesiological framework, the covenant, and therefore Christianity dictate that humankind love one another, that we look after and care for each other—specifically those without the necessary resources to care for themselves. Appropriate to the narrative of this paper's theme and the Project, it is apt to mention, two historical figures among others imbued with Koinonia; remarkable models that inform outreach ministry leadership. Pensively, one biblical and one modern day example, allows us to more readily grasp the extent to which empowerment through the Holy spirit can achieve positive results that are boundless.

In the biblical example, Nehemiah, as described in the Old Testament, led the people of Jerusalem in rebuilding the broken down walls of the city. In the text, Nehemiah 2:17-18, we learn that Nehemiah had a heart for his people and for his community. He put God first in all that he did. He was faithful, compassionate, and selfless. A bridge-builder between spirituality and community, Nehemiah was a civic leader, a community organizer, a community activist, a motivator, and a resourceful administrator highly favored by God.

Thus, from the biblical perspective, Nehemiah becomes the perfect example of the leadership that is required in today's church to engage, enlighten, empower and inform its congregants. Nehemiah is truly the right Old Testament role model for moving beyond the walls. He provided the community with leadership, with a plan, with encouragement, and led the way in rebuilding a city in ruins. Despite opposition, the wall was rebuilt in fifty-two days, and this rebuilding project helped develop the community at large. The rebuilding efforts affected the community at large instilling pride, strength, and hope to its people.

When people feel better about their selves and are equipped with information to improve their lives, they automatically perform better, their families become motivated to do more, and as a result, the community at large benefits, and is improved.

In the modern day example, the African Methodist Episcopal Church is steeped deeply in the fabric of American history and culture. Also known as the AME Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded by Richard Allen, in 1787, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Richard Allen was an ex-slave, a preacher, and arguably a community activist and organizer. Allen was one of the founders of the Free African Society (FAS), a mutual-aid society dedicated to social justice and to elevating "…the moral, financial, and educational status of Blacks."[3] Before the AME church, the FAS led the cry against the societal ills of racism, including and in particular, discrimination against blacks in religious worship.

When churches engage activities that have positive effects and benefits for the community, the church generates a sense of pride, and an infectious-can-do-spirit throughout the community. In turn, this propels individuals and groups to want to achieve, and get involved in making the community at large a better place. The Project data collected to-date, is encouraging and supports the claim that Community outreach is needed whether on a large or small scale. Further, it should be said that moving beyond the walls gives congregants a sense of doing, a sense of helping, feeding, clothing, helping neighbor, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. As in the beginning days of the AMEC with the Free African Society, we are still our brothers keeper, the churches duty is to care for one another, care for neighbor, care for all.

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[3]History of the AME Church, accessed February 21, 2014, http://christianity.about.com/od/AME/a/AME-Church-History.htm.

Summary

The *solution,* or, p*roposed treatment hypothesis* for this Model of Ministry follows that: If outreach ministries are made available, the congregation, and critically, the surrounding community will participate; taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and resources provided. Three major assumptions were used in the design of this Ministry Model as follows:

1) *Build it and they will come* - if outreach ministries are available, the congregation of Brookins Community AME Church and surrounding community will participate, taking advantage of and benefiting from the information and the associations presented.

2) Upon successful implementation, there will be: marked participation by the congregation and community resulting in an increased awareness of Brookins' goals and objectives with regard to community outreach; an expanded sense of community; and an extension of networks designed to engage and educate individuals, groups, and organizations.

3) By extending its reach beyond the walls of the sanctuary, Brookins Community AME Church, in effect will spread the love and compassion of Jesus Christ to humankind, enriching the lives of the people it touches, while developing a better and stronger sense of community. This partnering of church and community strengthens and helps create a pivotal extension of the church into the community, extending beyond the walls of the church helps to establish and build relationships with the community—our extended congregation.

The data analysis and results component of this project is compelling testimony to the adage—*build it and they will come,* the proposed treatment hypothesis, and major assumptions used in the design of this Model of Ministry. The results validate the proposed hypothesis on multiple levels of inquiry into the beliefs and ideas of the congregation and other participants. 96% of the participants were satisfied with the event. 95%would attend other community events hosted by Brookins AME Church. An

astounding 97% felt that the information presented during the Fair, was useful and 77% felt the church was doing a good job helping the community.

Opportunity abounds to present other programs and build upon the outreach efforts of Brookins AME. When asked for recommendations to improve the event, 10% did not respond; however, 69% indicated they had nothing to recommend; and 21% responded yes, citing examples of improvements. In the later scenario, the 69% most likely felt there was no need to improve the event, as their needs were satisfied. However, the 21% that did make recommendations for improvement provided meaningful insight for future projects. Some of these recommendations included statement like:

- Using social media and radio advertising to reach more people
- Maybe a Hispanic interpreter for the neighbors
- First Aid Training
- Bigger outreach
- Have more vendors able to present valuable information
- Just continue doing what they are doing
- There is great room for improvement

The Church needs to be visible in the community.

The spiritual passion to help those in need combined with project management skills, training, and education, are the right mix of tools needed to identify options that would be suitable in addressing future project requirements. Participant feedback has been archived and will be taken into account at such time the opportunity presents itself for another outreach event.

On a spiritual level, continuing to re-imagine the recurring themes in the spiritual autobiography and contextual analysis, there are definitive aspects of service, spirit, continuous learning, collaborating, and empowerment that were emboldened working with the agencies that were experienced in planning emergency preparedness events, and at the implementation stage representing the quality of all of the efforts making this event possible. Practical skills and experience developed throughout the years afford this candidate with many opportunities to be of service and excel in the provisioning and administration of programs and services to the church, its congregants, and extended community. The candidate is a student of planning, leading, organizing, and implementing outreach ministries with congregations and community. Prior to the call to pursue a doctorate of divinity, the candidate implemented a senior ministry, a prayer ministry, and a free legal aid ministry; and provided leadership and direction to fourteen outreach ministry committee chairpersons serving communities throughout Southern California while serving in the Women's Missionary Society of the AME Church. This experience, in effect, is a leading contributor to the success of the Emergency Preparedness event.

The ability to delegate and draw members into the process was instrumental in the successful outcome, because, no one individual can plan and implement an outreach effort without the continuing help and support of other human resources. It was a blessing to connect with members of the congregation outside of the church services on Sundays and to meet new faces from the community. The feeling of making a difference, sharing views and opinions, and engaging participants that believe in the mission of outreach ministry, brought to fore, the essence of collaboration and communication.

There were many occasions to note the field experience involved in this project, however, the primary research involved conducting interviews and focus-group meetings to capture the feedback of the community and congregants about their views on outreach ministry. The interviews and focus group served as a precursor to the posttest. This effort provided important insight about the parishioners' thoughts on the church and extending beyond the walls of the sanctuary. As the research data and analysis from this project indicates, this outreach event was of great benefit to the church and community. It is also important to note that efforts oftentimes multiply in unexpected ways. For example, as a result of the Emergency Preparedness Fair planning, a collaborative partnership was formed with the American Red Cross and CPR/First Aid Training was held on Saturday, March 29, 2014. Nineteen persons attended, and received a two year certification. Additionally, a solicitation for help with planning a Fair for a Women's Missionary Society in San Diego was received, indicating that this model can be replicated.

This model of ministry is one of discovery and inquiry into the community and the congregational views relative to outreach ministries. The objective is for Brookins Community AME Church to extend beyond the walls of the sanctuary, to build collaborative partnerships with community and established agencies the results of which will benefit both the congregation, and community at-large. This model employs an outreach ministry strategy that provides a framework for Brookins Community AME Church to extend beyond its walls to engage, enlighten, and empower community—the extended congregation.

The implementation results and feedback from the Emergency Preparedness Fair demonstrates that the goal(s) of this event were successfully managed and achieved.

According to the project timeline and tasks identified, there were virtually no challenges to the plan facilitating implementation as designed. Modestly, there were challenges having to do with the interface with other businesses and agencies; considering that persons contacted had busy schedules and/or were not always available according to the planning needs. This resulted in early morning and late night attempts to contact the appropriate resources while in keeping with the timeline for these activities.

Contact management was sometime complicated by the fact that from one year to another, roles and responsibilities changed, making it necessary to start from the beginning in establishing the right individuals to contact. Otherwise, there were no material changes to the project plan or task as stated in the project plan. Feedback from all of those that participated in the event was overwhelmingly positive. The agencies expressed their appreciation for the support and organization of the event, making their role easier.

The doctoral focus has changed from the initial project proposal which pursued a single doctoral focus area titled: *Needs Assessment for Programs and Ministries.* The Assessment would have entailed the development, distribution, and analysis of key information gathered from formal and informal surveys, to be administered locally, globally, or both, within and outside of the AME church. Additionally, the Bi-vocational Associate or Associate Minister was viewed as an underutilized resource that the pastorate could leverage in program and ministry development. However, over time and during the research phase, the approach toward designing the Model changed and neither the Needs Assessment nor the use of Associate Ministers, were any longer a requirement. Instead, Emergency Preparedness was selected as the example for development;

simplifying the process and time for implementation but yet still markedly impactful. It should be kept in mind that this particular outreach ministry model topic can also be implemented locally and throughout the hierarchical structure of the AME Church, nationally and globally. Emergency Preparedness is a topic that is not often spoke about in the church or underserved communities, yet disasters can strike anytime, anywhere. The American Red Cross, the Federal Office of Homeland Security, local and state agencies on emergency management are available to partner and Associate Ministers can still be utilized to organize, implement, or direct outreach ministries.

Conclusion

Emergency preparedness is so vital to congregations and community, yet, it is rarely discussed if at all in the church, and not enough in underserved communities. Drawing upon prior outreach ministry experience and a corporate background aided the candidate and help confirm that Emergency Preparedness was the right subject matter to educate and inform the target groups. As the research results indicate, this outreach ministry was of tremendous benefit and useful to the respondents.

The Church should never become complacent in its efforts to extend its reach beyond the wall of the sanctuary. Nehemiah 2:17-18 states, Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer suffer disgrace." I told them that the hand of my God had been gracious upon me, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let us start building!" So they committed themselves to the common good.

Outreach ministry is at the heart of the mission of the church—helping one another. A church that is not engaging in activities that benefit others beyond the scope of the congregation is failing to fulfill its duty as the body of Christ. It is my continued hope that my dedication to service, outreach, and ministries will provide the long needed relief to those in need and that the development of extended family networks serves to further God's work through Christian ministry and outreach, addressing the challenges indicated above.

This project began with zest and enthusiasm, knowing that emergency preparedness was the perfect outreach ministry model to design. Emergency preparedness is so vital to congregations and community, yet, it is rarely discussed if at all in the church, and not enough in underserved communities. As the results indicate, this outreach ministry was of tremendous benefit and useful to its participants. The zest and enthusiasm exhibited by the candidate in the beginning soon became contagious and spread to all those involved in planning and implementing this event.

The transformation that occurred during the months of planning and on implementation was subtle to the naked eye but powerful in the results. The image of Brookins is now transformed into a church that is there to help all willing to come. The participants and the candidate have been empowered knowing that they can make a difference in the lives of others. The attendees will no longer view the church as a place just for the members, but rather as a resource center for help as well as spiritual guidance. The most significant transformative experience was observing new life and enthusiasm infuse into the project committee and subsequently the congregation.

There is always room for improvement in all that we do. In consideration of lessons learned, contemplation should be given to the following for future projects:

- Approval from the church leadership and buy-off from the congregants is critical to planning and implementation.
- Consideration should be given to fundraising events and the use of sponsor for future events to underwrite the costs of advertising and promotion so as to reach a wider audience.
- Questionnaires should be developed and forwarded to the participating agencies to get there formal feedback about their experience.
- Establish a formal outreach ministry committee with members from the committees used with this Model (building upon their successes and enthusiasm) to formalize the process and programs for Brookins.
- Develop a webpage that includes the details of the event, its successes, and video and/or pictures from the event, serving to interest and engage others.
- Develop a roster of contacts for the agencies and assign a resource to periodically follow-up to determine new information.

It is my continued hope that my dedication to service, outreach, and ministry will provide the long needed relief to those in need; and that the development of extended family networks serve to further God's work through Christian ministry and outreach, addressing the challenges expressed in the above.

Outreach ministries, as supported by this Model of Ministry, present the opportunity for the church within the walls of the sanctuary to extend beyond its walls. The opportunity to become a commercial for God to the community—to people that perhaps may never step inside the walls of a sanctuary to know God and the saving grace of his son Jesus Christ. Outreach ministries provide a hands-on approach in witnessing to community that the church cares about its' neighbors, and that it moves beyond its' secured walls to engage, enlighten and empower humankind—called community.

The two and a half years of seminary and the two-year journey of this ministry model has reinforced the great need for the church, the AME Church in particular, to continue embracing its rich history and heritage of ministering beyond its walls through outreach ministries. Just like the early church and Free African Society (FAS) exemplify the words of the scripture: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods, and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action (1 Jn 3: 17-18)." The church of the 21st Century must as well. The need to do so and witness is as great as ever. The church as a leader in community, with its rich reservoir of knowledge, aids in development of community by sharing its resources.

Moving forward, the candidate will utilize this model of ministry's body of knowledge to plan, coordinate, and implement future outreach projects; projects that will establish valuable collaborative partnerships; develop new relationships, that improve community, and shine the light and love of Jesus as the beacon light in the community.

APPENDIX A

SAVE THE DATE FLYER

Guarda la Fecha

La Iglesia Brookins Community A.M.E.

Rev. Charolyn J. Jones, Event Coordinator

Se invita a la

Feria de Comunidad para Preparacíones de Emergencia

11:00 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.

Sabado, 11 de Enero, 2014

4831 S. Gramercy Place, Los Angeles, CA 90062

(323) 296-5610

¿Está su familia preparado para una emergencia?

¿Tiene un lugar de reuninerse para usted y su familia?

¿Tiene un plan de llamar un miembro de familia fuera de la zona?

Cómo la ud. a ponerse en contacto con ellos en caso de emergencia?

¿Tiene suficiente provisiones dispónible para ser autosuficiente para 7 dias?

"Venir y juntar con nostroros para un día de Preparacion de Emergencias"

BROOKINS COMMUNITY A.M.E. CHURCH

Patrocinado por:

El Comite de Brookins CAME Church Emergency Preparedness

"Provisiones Gratis (limitadas mientras que hay suficiente)"

SAVE THE DATE

Brookins Community A.M.E. Church

Rev. Charolyn J. Jones, Event Coordinator

invites you to an

Emergency Preparedness Community Fair

11:00 A.M. — 2:30 P.M.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11, 2014

4831 S. Gramercy Place, Los Angeles, CA 90062

(323) 296-5610 or (213) 448-7304

Are you and your family prepared for an emergency?

Have you developed a reunion plan for you and your family?

Have you set up and advised family members out of area, how you will contact them in case of an emergency? Do you have enough supplies available to be self supportive for 7 days?

"Come out and join us for a day of Emergency Preparedness"

BROOKINS COMMUNITY A.M.E. CHURCH

Sponsored by the:

Brookins CAME Church Emergency Preparedness Committee

"Free Giveaways while supplies last"

APPENDIX B

PREPARDNESS PROGRAM AGENDA

Brookins Community African Methodist Episcopal Church
Community Emergency Preparedness Fair
Saturday, January 11, 2014

Program

Welcome The Reverend Charolyn J. Jones, Event Coordinator
Brookins Community AME Church

Greetings
Brookins Community AME Church

Introductions Mrs. Cora Jackson - Fossett

Greetings Los Angeles Councilman Bernard C. Parks

Greetings Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

(Youth transition to lower level for presentation by Juan Carlos Lopez of the American Red Cross)

Presentations:
Joann Troncale, Emergency Manager
City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department

Southern Gas Company

Dr. Earl Perkins, Assistant Superintendent, School Operations
Los Angeles Unified School District

Preparedness Education Osas Otasowie, American Red Cross

Wrap-up/Giveaways/Survey's

Please visit the Emergency Preparedness Fair in the lower level

Brookins Community African Methodist Episcopal Church
Community Emergency Preparedness Fair
Saturday, January 11, 2014

Program

Welcome The Reverend Charolyn J. Jones, Event Coordinator
Brookins Community AME Church

Greetings
Brookins Community AME Church

Introductions Mrs. Cora Jackson - Fossett

Greetings Los Angeles Councilman Bernard C. Parks

Greetings Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas

(Youth transition to lower level for presentation by Juan Carlos Lopez of the American Red Cross)

Presentations:
Joann Troncale, Emergency Manager
City of Los Angeles Emergency Management Department

Southern Gas Company

Dr. Earl Perkins, Assistant Superintendent, School Operations
Los Angeles Unified School District

Preparedness Education Osas Otasowie, American Red Cross

Wrap-up/Giveaways/Survey's

Please visit the Emergency Preparedness Fair in the Lower Level

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Community Emergency Preparedness Fair – Survey
Saturday, January 11, 2014

1. Are you a member of Brookins Community AME Church? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If Yes, how long have you been a member? _____

   If No, are you a member of another congregation? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If so, what congregation? _____

2. How did you learn about this event? Friend [ ] Newspaper [ ] Other Source [ ]

   Comments:_____

3. Was the information useful? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If so, was the information useful?
   If not, what information was missing?

   Comments:_____

4. Were you satisfied with this event?

   On a scale of 1 to 3, 3 being Very Satisfied, 2 Somewhat Satisfied, and 1 Least Satisfied, circle the rating that best describes your level of satisfaction. 1 2 3

   Comments:_____

5. Would you attend other Community events here at Brookins? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If so, circle all of the topics that would be of interest to you:

   Affordable Healthcare Act (Obamacare)

   Health and Fitness Education

   Social Security Benefits and Resource Information

   Financial Literacy on Debt Elimination, Savings, Budgeting Investing

   Youth Program information on Education, Career Readiness, Personal Growth

   First Aid and CPR Training

   Comments:_____

(over)

6. How likely are you to attend Church Service here as a result of attending this event?

   Circle the one that best represents your response: Most likely Likely Less Likely

   Comments:_____

7. Is the Church doing a good job in helping the community?

   Comments:_____

8. Do you have any recommendations as too how we could improve this event?

   Yes [ ] No [ ]

   Comments:_____

APPENDIX D

PROJECT TIMELINE

PROJECT TIMELINE

Project Timeline

September 2013
• Present Ministry Model to Church Conference and ask for their support.
• Meet with Context Associates.
• Contact the American Red Cross for their availability on January 11, 2014 for Disaster Preparedness Seminar.
• Develop open-ended questions for Interviews and Focus Group.
• Schedule Focus Group.
October 2013
• Conduct Interviews.
• Meet with Context Associates.
• Host Focus Group.
• Establish Project Committees.
November 2013
• Conduct Interviews.
• Meet with Context Associates.
• Meet with Project Committee.
• Notify congregation and community of upcoming Outreach Ministry (Emergency Preparedness Fair).
December 2013
• Notify congregation and community of upcoming Outreach Ministry (Disaster Preparedness Training).
• Meet with Context Associates.
• Meet with Project Committee.
• Develop Bilingual Flyers.
• Develop questions for Questionnaire.
January 2014
• Meet with Project Committee.
• Meet with Context Associates.
• Distribute Bilingual Flyers throughout neighborhood of the church.
• Implement Outreach Ministry.

• Have event attendees complete Questionnaire.
• Analyze data.
• Schedule Project Results Evaluation Meeting.
February 2014
• Analyze data.
• Interpret data.
• Meet with Context Associates.
March 2014
• Analyze data.
• Interpret data.
• Host Project Results Evaluation Meeting.

APPENDIX E

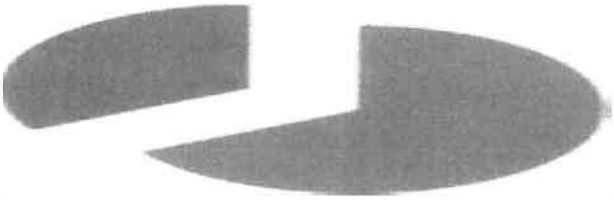
EMERGENCY PREPARDNESS SUMMARY REPORT

Emergency Preparedness Community Fair Survey Summary Report

January 11, 2014

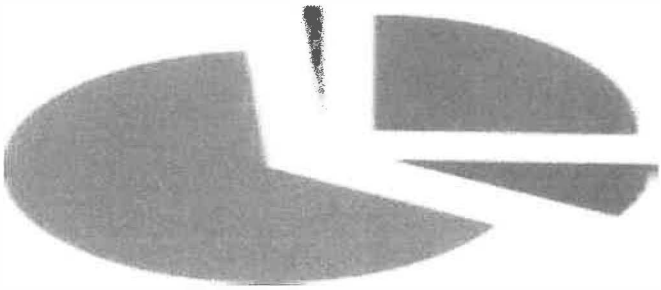
Are you a member of Brookins Community AME Church?

Yes 67% No 33%



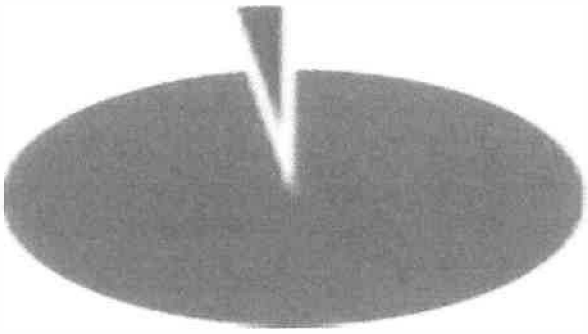
How did you learn about this event?

No Response 1% Other Source 65% Friend 26% Newspaper 8%



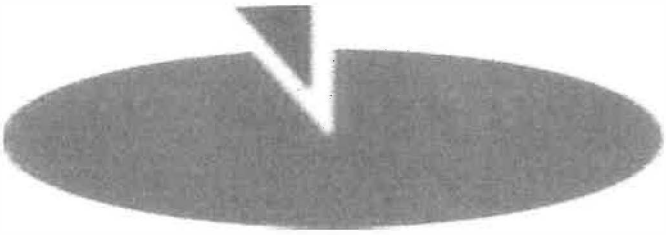
Was the information useful?

No Response 3% Yes 97%



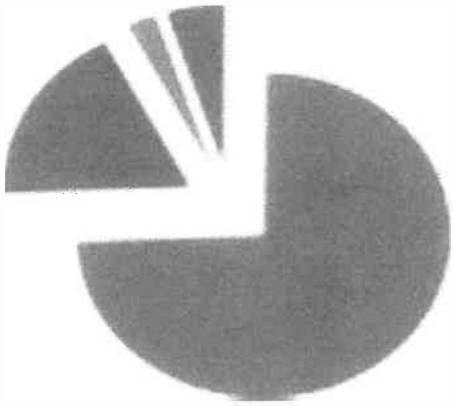
Were you satisfied with this event?

Very Satisfied 96% Somewhat Satisfied 4%



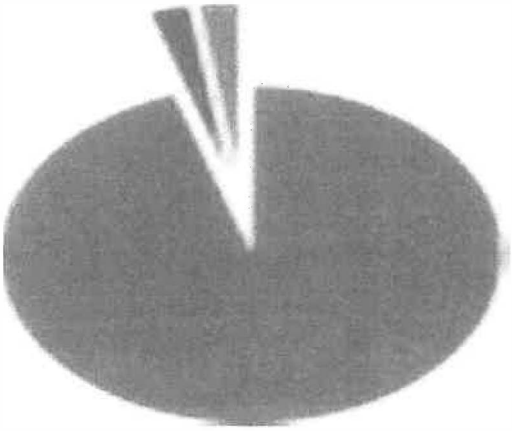
How likely are you to attend Church Service here as a result of attending this event?

No Response 5% Less Likely 3% Likely 18% Most Likely 74%



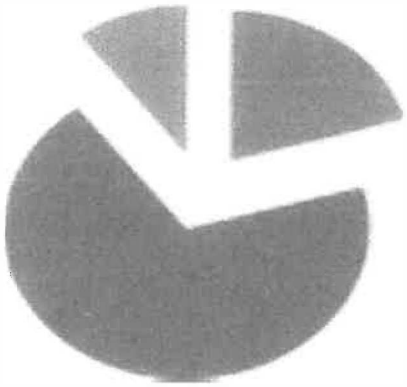
Would you attend other Community events here at Brookins?

No 2% No Response 3% Yes 95%



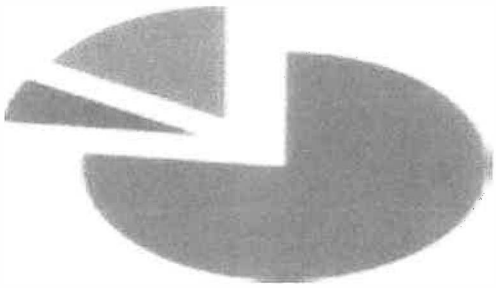
Do you have any recommendations as to how we could improve this event?

No 69% Yes 69 % No Response 21%



Is the Church doing a good job in helping the community?

Comment 17% No Response 6% Yes 77%



APPENDIX F

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FAIR SURVEY

Community Emergency Preparedness Fair – Survey
Saturday, January 11, 2014

1. Are you a member of Brookins Community AME Church? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If Yes, how long have you been a member? _____

   If No, are you a member of another congregation? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If so, what congregation? _____

2. How did you learn about this event? Friend [ ] Newspaper [ ] Other Source [ ]

   Comments:_____

3. Was the information useful? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If so, was the information useful?
   If not, what information was missing?

   Comments:_____

4. Were you satisfied with this event?

   On a scale of 1 to 3, 3 being Very Satisfied, 2 Somewhat Satisfied, and 1 Least Satisfied, circle the rating that best describes your level of satisfaction. 1 2 3

   Comments:_____

5. Would you attend other Community events here at Brookins? Yes [ ] No [ ]

   If so, circle all of the topics that would be of interest to you:

   Affordable Healthcare Act (Obamacare)

   Health and Fitness Education

   Social Security Benefits and Resource Information

   Financial Literacy on Debt Elimination, Savings, Budgeting Investing

   Youth Program information on Education, Career Readiness, Personal Growth

   First Aid and CPR Training

   Comments:_____

(over)

6. How likely are you to attend Church Service here as a result of attending this event?

   Circle the one that best represents your response: Most likely Likely Less Likely

   Comments:_____

7. Is the Church doing a good job in helping the community?

   Comments:_____

8. Do you have any recommendations as too how we could improve this event?

   Yes [ ] No [ ]

   Comments:_____

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